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OCTOBER 7, 2015

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Somerset

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Guide price: £1,850,000

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Kent Cowden

An exciting major renovation project of a Listed Grade II country house (about 5,100 sq ft) with 16th century Tudor origins on the Kent/Sussex/Surrey borders.

- Reception hall • 3 reception rooms • Proposed en suite master bedroom • 5 further bedrooms
- 3 proposed bathrooms • Proposed bedroom 7/playroom • Semi-derelict garage/stable for restoration
- Gardens & grounds requiring landscaping • In all about 2 acres

Guide price: £1,300,000

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Wiltshire

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A beautiful Grade I listed 17th century family home designed by the architect Christopher Wren and steeped in history, now on the open market for the first time in 600 years. Accommodation includes 5 reception rooms, 6 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, garage for 3 cars, walled garden, orangery, separate flat. About 0.63 acre.

Guide price: £3,500,000

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Superb site for substantial farmhouse

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Wincanton: 2.5 miles, Bruton: 3 miles, Gillingham: 7.5 miles

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replacing current farmhouse, 2 agriculturally tied farm
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and towards Shaftesbury, easy access on to the A303

About 219 acres | Guide £3.75 million

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Listed Georgian house within easy reach of London

LITTLE CHALFONT, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Chalfont & Latimer: 1 mile (London Marylebone from 35 minutes),
Amersham: 2.3 miles, Central London: 30 miles

Grade II* listed, 4 reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, orangery, master bedroom suite, guest suite, 5 further bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, indoor swimming pool, walled garden, tennis court, croquet lawn, games room, garaging for 5 cars, outbuildings and stores, deer park, landscaped gardens

About 13.5 acres | Guide £6.5 million

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Savills London Country Department
020 3489 0615
hmaconochie@savills.com

Nick Pounce
Savills Amersham
01494 256865
npounce@savills.com

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Somerset, Blackford

Guide Price £1,425,000



A handsome grade II listed Georgian farmhouse with annexe, pool and views over local countryside.

Sherborne 6 miles | Yeovil 11 miles
A303 1 mile

About 0.7 acre

Hall | Drawing room | Sitting room | Kitchen/dining room | Study | Playroom | Garden room
Master bedroom suite | 5 Further bedrooms
2 Bathrooms | Swimming pool | Barn
Garaging | Gardens



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Exeter 21 miles

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5 Bath/shower rooms | Mature gardens
Swimming pool | Stables | Barns | Garaging
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Pasture | Woodland | EPC rating F



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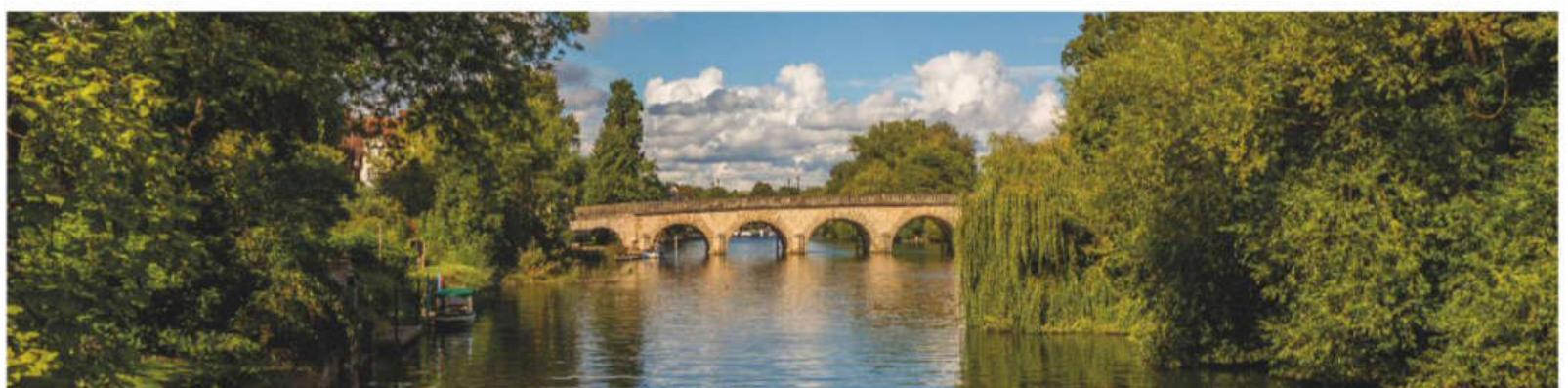
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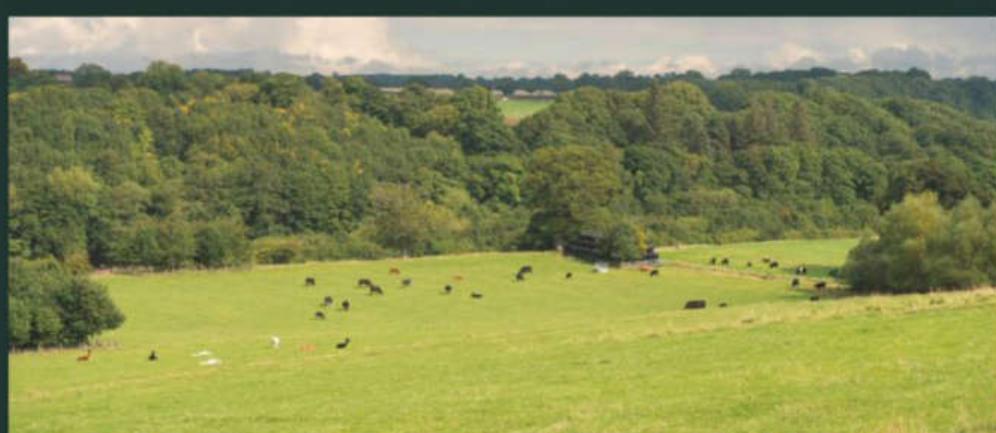
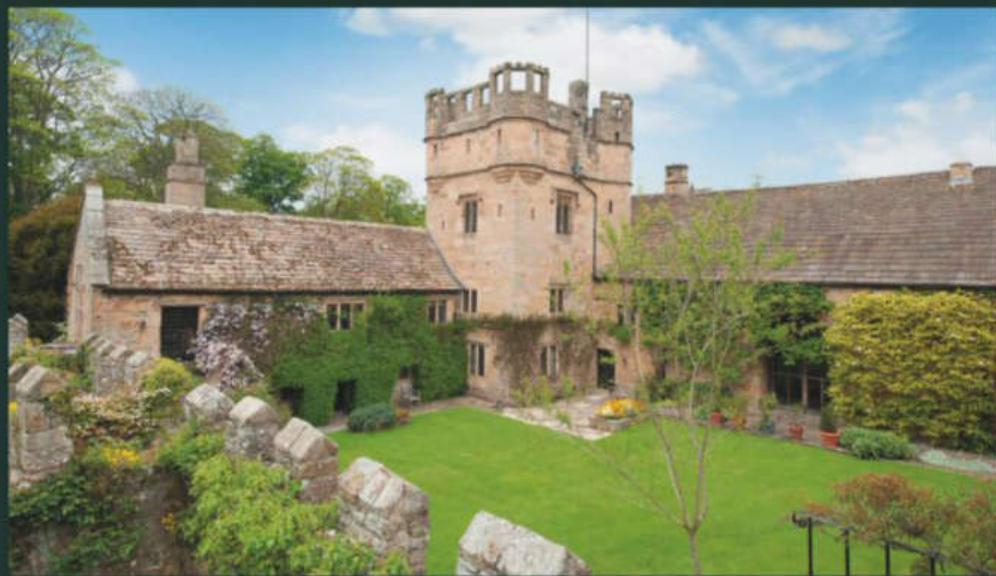
Dating from the 17th century, Creek House is an intriguing period home with charm from many different eras including the Victorian and Arts and Crafts. With studios nearby, Shepperton has attracted many residents from the TV, film and theatre world and this lovely home has had its share of famous owners too. There is a separate two bedroom annexe that adjoins to the property and could easily be re-incorporated into the main house.

Six bedrooms | four reception rooms | four bathrooms | separate two bedroom annexe | garden with mooring | off street parking | extended land adjacent to the property | EPC rating D

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Guide price: £3,000,000

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About 5.29 acres | Guide £1.5 million

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Bedfords

est.1966

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Guide: £775,000

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Guide: £800,000

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Bedfords

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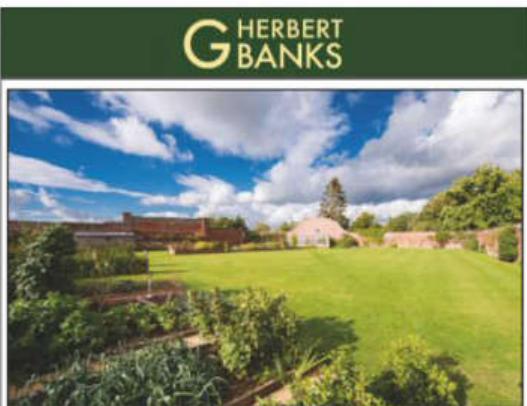
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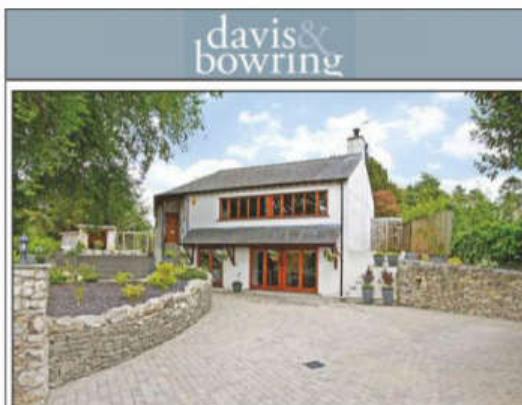


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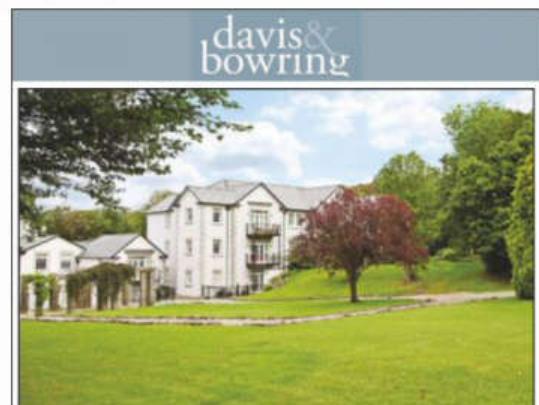
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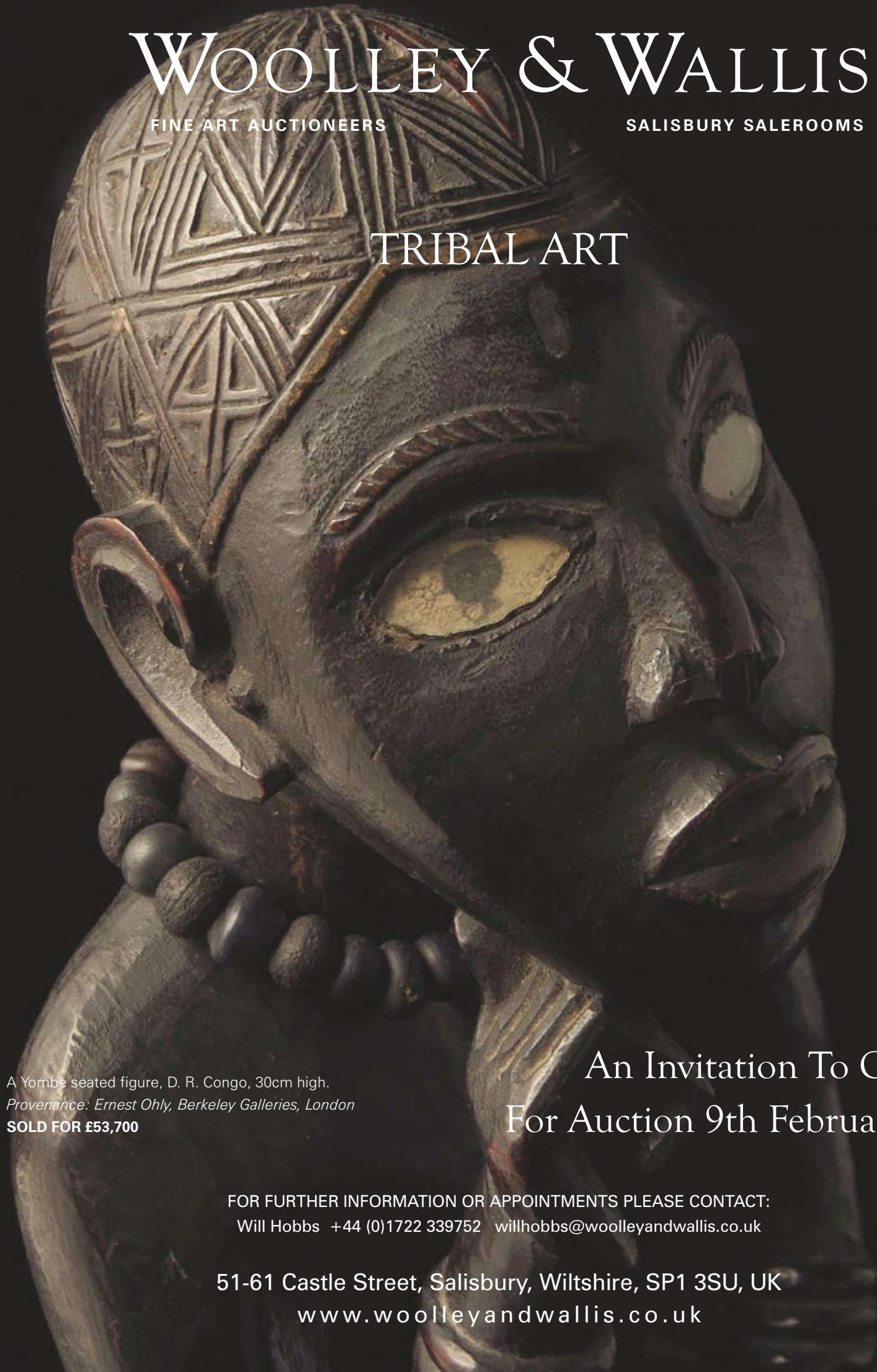
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COUNTRY LIFE

VOL CCIX NO 41, OCTOBER 7, 2015



Miss Candida Crawford

Candida, aged 24, is the youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs George Crawford of Betz-le-Château, Loire, France. Educated at Saint-Denis International School, Loches, Candida—who lives between France and England—is a professional rider.

Photographed by Chris Allerton at home in England

Contents October 7, 2015



A farmhouse kitchen, photographed by Michael Crockett/Getty Images

Blood on the stage

'The medics' room was chock-a-block with people fainting'

How it's done,
page 66



Roe-deer stalking

'Respect, but also a far deeper emotion, should be present in all hunters'

Shoot your supper,
page 102



Kitchen secrets

'Butter is very important—I couldn't live without it'

Michel Roux Jr,
page 94



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Enthroned in splendour

WHICH room will future generations identify as the most revealing of early 21st-century tastes in interiors? In 2000, it would have been the family kitchen, its formidable displays of cooking technology reflecting its status as a space for chatting with friends as well as feeding the household. In terms of cost, however, the kitchen has been overtaken by the bathroom.

Bathrooms are no longer shared; they're selfish, sensory indulgences—the equipment goes far beyond what's needed for washing—in a pressured world. For the country house, this completes the revolution that began in the 1980s. Owners needn't feel that they are sacrificing comfort when they acquire one—quite the reverse.

In the Victorian era, traditionalists scorned the new developments in plumbing. Luxury meant a relay of servants carrying cans of hot water to a tin bath in front of a fire, rather than hot and cold running water. The Americans, less

plentifully supplied with 'help', thought differently and Consuelo Vanderbilt, bride of the Duke of Marlborough, was horrified to find queues of ladies' maids jostling in the corridors of grand country houses, as they tried to secure bath time for their mistresses before dinner.

Well into the second half of the 20th century, guests would be shown bathrooms that were penitential in decoration, arctic in temperature and reachable only by a desperate dash down an icy passage. No such stoicism is needed now. Wet rooms are places of wonder, sumptuous in their materials and ingenious in their technology.

Such visions of Sybaris won't, perhaps, appeal to owners who seek harmony between modern standards and Georgian or Victorian architecture. The good news, however (page 86), is that top-of-the-range suppliers offer designs of basins, baths and taps that suit period themes. Voluptuous effects, historic feel—owners can have their cake (not of soap!) and eat it.

Consolations of autumn

Country people think differently about the seasons from their town cousins. The urban heart sinks at the onset of autumn; the next six months will bring delayed trains, stuffy, overheated offices and travelling in the dark and cold, a gloom only interrupted by the gaudiness of the run up to Christmas.

But as the countryside says goodbye to the last golden days of September, it turns with excitement to the next phase of the year—and its sporting traditions. And well it might. Shooting of all kinds generates £2.5 billion a year in goods and services and as many as 74,000 jobs may rely on it—benefits that are particularly welcome in remote rural areas. Pheasants and partridge are spectacular to look at and magnificent to eat (*Town & Country*, page 32).

Hunting is tuning up as well and the last days of the Flat-racing season are giving over to the more full-throated roar of the National Hunt season. There will be sloe gin, blackberry-and-apple crumble and fires. England's rugby disaster will fade. What's not to like about October?

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Editor Mark Hedges

Editor's PA Rosie Paterson 84428
Telephone numbers are prefixed by **020-314**
Emails are name.surname@timeinc.com

Editorial Enquiries 84444

Subscription Enquiries 0303 333 4555

Deputy Editor/Travel Editor Rupert Uloth 84431
Managing Editor Kate Green 84441
Architectural Editor John Goodall 84439
Gardens Editor Kathryn Bradley-Hole 84433
Fine Arts & Books Editor Mary Miers 84438
Property Editor Arabella Youens 84432
Features Editors Paula Lester and Flora Howard 84446
Deputy Features Editor Katy Birchall 84436
Luxury Editor Hetty Chidwick 84430

Editorial Assistant Geoff Heath-Taylor 84444

Art Editor Phil Crewdon 84427

Deputy Art Editor Heather Clark 84422

Designer Emma McCall 84423

Picture Editor Vicki Wilkes 84434

Picture Desk Assistant Emily Anderson 84421

Chief Sub-Editor Jane Watkins 84426

Deputy Chief Sub-Editor

Annunciata Walton 84424

Senior Sub-Editor Victoria Marston 84425

Photographic Library Manager

Justin Hobson 84474

Property Correspondent Penny Churchill

Managing Editor Countrylife.co.uk

Holly Kirkwood 84429

Acting PR Manager Victoria Higham 85401

Editor-at-Large Clive Aslet

Managing Director Paul Williams

Publishing Director Jean Christie 84300

Group Property Ad Manager

John Gaylard 84201

Deputy Property Ad Manager

Laura Harley 84199

Country Johanne Calnan 84208;

Nick Poulton 84232; Lucy Hall 84206

International Danielle Walden 84209

Antiques & Fine Arts Manager

Jonathan Hearn 84461

Head of Market: Country & Shooting

Rosemary Archer 82610

Brand Manager

Kate Barnfield 82622

Business Development Manager

Kay Wood 82652; Lindsey Webster 82690

Head of Luxury

Yasmin Sungur 82663

Classified Sales

Daniel Cash 82539; Kate McArdle 82557

Advertising and Classified Production

Stephen Turner 82681

Inserts Mona Amarasakera 83710

Advertisorials and sponsorship

Carly Wright 82629

Head of Marketing Claire Thompson 84301

US Representative Kate Buckley 001845516

4533;buckley@buckleypell.com



Blackcaps prefer British grub

Terry Whittaker/2020VISION/naturepl.com

Good restaurants here: for the first time, BTO research shows that the feeding of garden birds can influence migratory habits and species distribution. Blackcaps (above, feasting on wild berries) breeding in Germany and Austria are now spending the winter in Britain rather than southern Spain and the BTO thinks this is down to our enthusiasm for putting out bird food. Milder winters are influential, too, but the birds' increased presence coincided with the rise in commercial bird foods. Interestingly, blackcaps that winter here have longer, narrower beaks than those in Spain, suggesting they are adapting to their wider diet—*the birds, cheerful trilling members of the warbler family, particularly enjoy sunflower seeds and fat balls.*

M&S is game to sell more meats

NEALY 16 months after Marks & Spencer (M&S) took grouse off its shelves in response to an anti-shooting social-media campaign, it tells COUNTRY LIFE that it will be selling a greater range of game this winter, including rabbit, pigeon and venison.

In 2013, M&S became the first mainstream supermarket to stock whole grouse, shot on moors in Northumberland and Yorkshire, which it sold for £10 each in its flagship Kensington High Street and Marble Arch stores in London.

Sales went well, but, in July 2014, M&S had to abandon plans to sell the flavoursome, healthy, native game-bird meat in further stores after Mark Avery, a former conservation

director of the RSPB, whipped up a social-media storm, accusing grouse-moor owners and keepers of killing raptors, such as the hen harrier, in order to ensure a shootable surplus of birds.

M&S responded by withdrawing grouse from sale until a code of conduct could be enforced with its suppliers. This season, it had hoped to source grouse from an estate in Dumfriesshire, but a poor breeding season curtailed shooting.

However, Iceland, which specialises in frozen fare, is selling frozen whole grouse at £8.99 for a pack of two. The grouse, supplied by Kezie Foods, are sourced from moors in northern England and Scotland and are inspected by a Foods Standards



Fair game:
venison will now
be sold at
selected M&S
stores 'to meet
demand from
customers'

Agency vet. The store states: 'We do not source from moorlands with unethical or questionable practices.'

The expanded game range being introduced by M&S, which will be offered at selected stores, includes rabbit legs, woodpigeon, French partridge, farmed duck and farmed venison. There will also be a pork, apple and Calvados three-game roast (pheasant, partridge and pigeon) with game gravy and a pork, pheasant, bacon and apple two-bird roast (guinea fowl and duck) available for Christmas.

'Each year, our game range is extended to meet demand from customers looking for an alternative to more everyday meats,' explains an M&S spokesman.

Pine martens move to Wales



'Now, if my memory serves me correctly, I need to turn right after Birmingham'

TWENTY Scottish pine martens are beginning a new life in mid Wales as part of Britain's first ever carnivore-recovery scheme on a national scale. Twenty more will be transferred next year to the same area of uninhabited forest on the Cambrian Mountains. The landmark project is being led by the Vincent Wildlife Trust, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

Sightings of pine martens in England and Wales are extremely sporadic, not helped by the fact that the appealing creature, with its bat ears, kittenish face and smart, creamy bib, lives a shadowy life in trees and is most active at twilight. The pine marten has,

however, made a good recovery in Scotland after numbers dwindled a century ago due to the combination of human persecution—they rob birds' nests and have been blamed by some for the disappearance of the capercaillie—and loss of forest habitat.

The relocation of these pine martens, which will be released from pens after a few days' acclimatisation and then radio-tracked, could be a conservation triumph in other ways; the cat-sized mustelid is known to feed on the grey squirrel, which is easier to catch than its red counterpart. If you spot a pine marten, please report it to the Vincent Wildlife Trust on 01531 636441.

M&S game comes from the Yorkshire Game Company, which works with select estates across northern England and the Scottish borders and has a base on the west coast of Scotland. The company is supported by the GWCT.

'They source game to the highest quality standards and adhere to our strict codes of practice,' adds the M&S spokesman. 'We source all our game to the highest quality standards, from estates we know and trust.'

'We've developed the industry's first codes of practice for game management, which have been independently verified and audited, and we're committed to working closely with these well-managed estates as part of our Farming for the Future programme.'

Game is good for you—pheasant and partridge contain high levels of iron, protein and vitamin B6 and venison is low in saturated fatty acids and high in iron and protein. With pheasant shooting starting this week, BASC has written to all local UK newspapers to extol the benefits of eating the bird.

Figures for game consumption are hard to quantify in comparison to those for beef and lamb, although a market report by Mintel says sales rose by 9% (mainly of venison) in 2014 and figures from the Countryside Alliance's Game to Eat campaign suggest that nearly 50% of game dealers have increased their businesses in the past five years. Adrian Lyons, managing director of Yorkshire



One for the pot: pheasant meat is high in iron and protein

Game Ltd, says that market indications show that there is important potential for widening the game market: 'Grouse numbers are down year on year, which meant a poor sales month in August, but M&S's new ranges are increasing sales and we are seeing significant interest in new product development in game from major companies.' PL ➤

Good week for

The Countryside Alliance

Simon Hart, chief executive until his departure to become the MP for Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire, returns as chairman

Scottish wildlife

An annual report shows that wildlife crime in Scotland dropped by 20% last year and there continue to be no convictions for illegal hunting

Harry Potter

A new edition of the first novel in the series is released this week, with illustrations by Carnegie medal-winning artist Jim Kay

Bad week for

Help for Heroes

Despite its admirable fundraising for wounded soldiers, the charities watchdog is looking into accusations of directionless spending and unused facilities

Gannets

Research reveals that two planned wind farms are threatening the world's largest colony of gannets in the Firth of Forth; the turbines could kill up to 12 times more birds than original estimates suggested

The Thames fish population

A study by Royal Holloway says that up to three-quarters of fish sampled from the river were found to have plastic fibres in their gut



Ten buildings need your love

THE Victorian Society has released its annual naming and shaming of the 10 worst cases of neglect of Victorian and Edwardian buildings and structures, as nominated by the public. In particular, there are two once-magnificent country houses.

Grade I-listed Kinnel Hall in Conwy, known as the 'Welsh Versailles', was bought in 2011 by a company registered in the Virgin Islands, but the stated plan to turn it into a hotel is no closer to fruition than it was four years ago. As regards Grade II-listed Overstone Hall in Northamptonshire, the Victorian Society says the owners should face up to owning a historic building or sell it at a more realistic price—it was put up for sale at £1 million five years ago and is in a parlous state.

The list of shame also includes Birnbeck Pier at Weston-super-Mare, which is on the verge of collapse due to storm damage; Brighton's

seafront walk, Madeira Terrace, thought to be the world's longest cast-iron structure, which is currently closed to the public, but is, at least, due for repair; and the Sheerness Boat Store on the Isle of Sheppey, an important site that desperately needs a new owner. To donate towards the saving of these buildings, visit www.victoriansociety.org.uk or text VICT00 followed by £1, £2, £3, £4, £5 or £10 to 70070.

There is some good news on 2014's unloved buildings: a friends group has been established to tackle Cardiff Coal Exchange; Hammerhead Crane in Cowes has received a £76,000 grant from Historic England; and the campaign to resurrect Sheffield's Crimean War Memorial in time for the 160th anniversary of the end of the war next year has support.

Donating for life and love

SIR PAUL McCARTNEY, Boris Johnson, Joanna Lumley, Felicity Kendal, Dame Zaha Hadid, Royal Academicians and other living artists have donated artworks of their own creation to be auctioned, along with works by such leading names as Chagall, Craigie Aitchison and John Piper, for the benefit of two charities united by a shared belief in the power of art and social conscience. Proceeds will be split between the Watts Gallery Trust, which takes inspiration from the 'Art for All' ethos of Victorian artist G. F. Watts, to enhance the lives of vulnerable members of society through art, and Transplant Links Community, a charity founded by doctor and artist Jennie Jewitt-Harris to send medical volunteers to developing countries to perform transplants. Online bidding (www.bit.ly/tlcwattsauktion) runs until October 17, during which time the works will be on show at the Watts Contemporary Gallery at Compton in Surrey (01483 810235; www.wattsgallery.org.uk). MM

Diary of a Lake District lady

THE genteel life and times of Jessy and John Harden, a well-to-do Georgian couple who mixed with Lake District literati such as Wordsworth, Coleridge and Raeburn, have been brought vividly to life in the pages of a new book.

Edited by historian Maurice Dybeck, a former archivist at the Hardens' home at Brathay



The local laundress by John Harden: he and his wife's linen will be aired in a new book of their work

Hall in Ambleside, *Jessy's Journal* paints an intriguing picture of day-to-day goings on in the upper echelons of 19th-century society.

Drawing on the material contained in Mrs Harden's letters to her sister in India and Mr Harden's sketches and watercolours, Mr Dybeck's scholarly work won the David Winkworth prize for illustration and presentation at this year's Lakeland book-of-the-year awards. Judge Hunter Davies described it as 'a little gem' and 'funny and sharp... as Jessy has a caustic tongue'. The anthology is published by the Brathay Trust charity and costs £20 (0844 225 3100; www.brathay.org.uk). PL



The wheels on the bus: this artistic endeavour by London Mayor Boris Johnson will be up for grabs

In praise of Palladio

THE enduring legacy of Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio is examined in a new RIBA exhibition, 'Palladian Design: The Good, the Bad and the Unexpected', at 66, Portland Place, London W1 (until January 9, 2016). Despite his designs largely being confined to the region of Vicenza in Italy, Palladio's treatise *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura*, encapsulating his ideas on symmetry, harmonic proportions and the Classical orders, proved hugely influential.

Although Inigo Jones was the first British architect to incorporate his ideas at the Queen's House, Greenwich, and the Banqueting House, Whitehall, by the 18th century, the Palladian style was being adopted for country houses across England.

The exhibition shows how Palladio's ideas have been endlessly recycled. The most striking exhibit is a pine-and-mahogany model from 1726 of James Gibbs's St Martin-



An example of the good: Chadsworth Cottage in North Carolina

in-the Fields, the portico of which was based on the Pantheon, Palladio's favourite building.

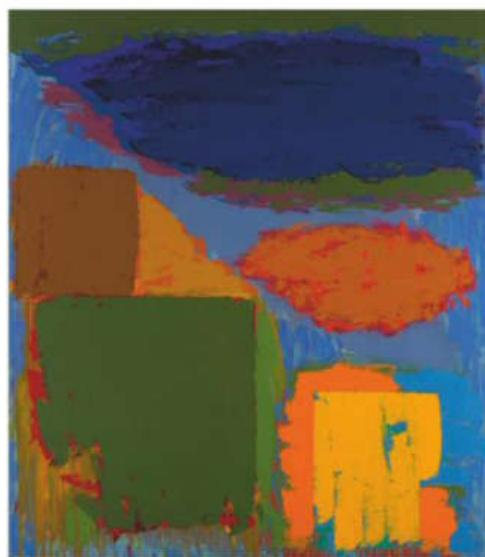
Vying with it is a model of Julian Bicknell's Henbury Hall, based on Palladio's Villa Rotunda and completed as recently as 1986. It reflects the way that, as enthusiasm for Modernism faded in the last century, Palladianism regained popularity for offering 'the comfort of the familiar'. *Jack Watkins*

Damien Hirst opens gallery

A FAMOUS American artist was asked if John Hoyland (1934–2011) was England's best abstract painter. 'Is there anyone else?' he replied. That is also the opinion of Damien Hirst, who pays his fellow Yorkshireman the ultimate compliment of displaying 33 magisterial abstract paintings from the first half (1964–82) of Hoyland's career to inaugurate his Newport Street Gallery in Vauxhall, London SW8.

Mr Hirst has always thought big and acted with style. He now follows the example of his first champion, Charles Saatchi, by showing his collection of other artists' work in his own gallery, which will be open to the public from tomorrow (October 8) free of charge. The result is indubitably the contemporary art event of the year in Britain, with, one hopes, international repercussions.

This display of Hoyland's ravishing paintings, one of which is more than 15ft wide, might have been made for the 37,000sq ft space, with its abundant natural light, high, white walls and long vistas—it is the result of a £25 million conversion by architects Caruso St John, which seamlessly adds two new buildings at either end of three Edwardian ones. The show is open until April 3, 2016 (020-3141 9320; www.newportstreetgallery.com). *John McEwen*



Opening act: John Hoyland's *Longspeak 18.4.79*

Country Mouse Fair-weather fishing

I 'VE never been sunburnt in England in October—until last week. My annual salmon-fishing trip, this year to the River Derwent in Cumbria rather than Scotland's Findhorn, was sun-kissed, balmy and boiling, leaving me red-faced and cursing this remarkable Indian summer.

Hot weather is completely hopeless for fishing—salmon run up the river from the sea to their spawning grounds when the river is full, following downpours, and, frankly, the more rain, the merrier. However, the Derwent looked as if someone had pulled the plug out of the riverbed and, although we saw kingfishers, dozens of red admiral butterflies and great hatches of sedges, we had the same result we've had for the past three years: no water and no fish, but with the knowledge that our bad luck cannot hold out for much longer.

Can it? The curse of being a salmon fisherman has bitten me deep; my wife thinks me quite mad for spending weeks casting a fly to no avail. But the possibility of the River Derwent being a fishing paradise was clear to see, if only the weather in the wettest part of England could behave and, er, rain, as, with impeccable timing, it's doing now. Maybe, I will go next year—maybe in August, when it's meant to be dry, so it will probably pour. **MH**

Town Mouse

Up where the air is clear

ON Sunday, the sun shone for the Wimbledon BookFest. I was chairing Ben Fogle's exposition of his book *Labrador*—an event marred only by the ban on having dogs in the tent. Labradors were originally sea dogs, we discovered, trained to retrieve fish from the scuppers of boats and bits of tackle that had gone overboard; then, apparently, the Earl of Malmesbury saw them performing tricks in Poole Harbour and they were taken upmarket. David Attenborough has speculated that dogs are successful parasites, so adorable that we can't resist them. Think of a labrador puppy and you can see what he means.

So it should have been a lovely day. But, oh, the drive to King's Cross to catch a train to a family event and, oh, the crowds! I'd been in Stockholm, you see—one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. People walk in the streets without being jostled. Cyclists prefer old-fashioned bikes to aggressive Lycra. The air is clear. And the rest of the 20th century didn't bring architectural horrors, but the charming blend of Classicism and sculpture known as Swedish Grace. This was Johnny's treat before going to Oxford, rounded off by what I can confidently say is the best hamburger in the Western Hemisphere, at The Flying Elk. London's a rough old place by comparison. **CA**





Quiz of the week

- 1) Wilkins Micawber is a character in which Charles Dickens novel?
- 2) Who was the UK's youngest Prime Minister, appointed at the age of 24?
- 3) What chemical element has the symbol Fe?
- 4) In which sport is there a ball named the jack?
- 5) By which scale would you measure the spiciness of a chilli pepper?

100 years ago in COUNTRY LIFE October 9, 1915



SIR—I beg to enclose a photograph which I hope you may be able to use for reproduction in COUNTRY LIFE. It depicts a ferret and a cat partaking of milk together. I consider this unique, especially so as the pair have not been reared together; in fact, pussy is a stray who found a good home near the ferret's quarters. Pussy is often admitted to the ferret's cage, where the pair will frolic together in quite a remarkable and amusing manner. I may say that the owner (Mr Fred Hartley of Skipton) informs me that the ferret has hitherto proved to be very keen on dispatching anything in the way of small livestock.

Rennie Dodgson

Words of the week

Galericulate (adjective)

Covered by a hat

Hypobulia (noun)

Difficulty in making decisions

Rebarbative (adjective)

Repulsive, off-putting, daunting

1) 'David Copperfield' 2) William Pitt the Younger 3) Iron 4) Bowls 5) The Scoville Scale

The nature of things

Sweet chestnut

IT'S one of Britain's best-loved tree species and it's naturalised in some areas, but *Castanea sativa* isn't a native, having arrived with the Romans.

Most likely, they would have found the home-grown fruits disappointing when compared with the whoppers annually harvested in hotter climates. Two, three or even four small nuts in leathery jackets sit hugger-mugger in the prickly-hedgehog cases of many British trees; whereas a crop of large Mediterranean or Levantine nuts, ripened by southern sun, have, for millennia, been ground into a starchy flour for baking—and, of course, the chopped nuts make good stuffing. In Corsica, they're ground into polenta flour and even brewed into beer.

Sweet chestnut makes a magnificent specimen tree for parks and estates—it's fast-growing, wide-spreading and achieves great character in maturity, when there's often a furrowed, barley-twist contortion in the thick bark. The heavy, neutral-to-acid clays of the Kent and Sussex Weald are *Castanea*'s forestry stronghold, where thousands of acres of coppiced chestnut woods produce tannin-rich timber



for palings, vernacular post-and-rail fencing, gateposts and durable stakes.

The world's oldest known *Castanea* (between 2,000 and 4,000 years old) is the 'hundred horse chestnut' on the eastern slope of Mount Etna in Sicily; the rangy Tortworth chestnut, in Gloucestershire, Britain's most venerable, is said to predate the Conquest. **KBH**

Illustration by Bill Donohoe

Time to buy



Traditional weather clock, £275, Bramwell Brown (020-7183 3651; www.bramwellbrown.com)



Adult Houndstooth English alpaca hat, £65, Noop Designs (01172 616166; www.noopdesigns.co.uk)



Hand-cream and body-wash gift set, £22.50, Just Bee (07779 118249; www.justbeepure.co.uk)



Words! Mere words! How terrible they were! How clear, and vivid, and cruel!

One could not escape from them. And yet what a subtle magic there was in them! They seemed to be able to give a plastic form to formless things, and to have a music of their own as sweet as that of viola or of lute. Mere words!

Was there anything so real as words?

*The Picture of Dorian Gray,
Oscar Wilde*

Unmissable events

Exhibition

Until October 10

'Otherworld', The Coningsby Gallery, Holborn, 30, Tottenham Street, London W1. A new collection of paintings from Scottish figurative artist Patsy McArthur capturing the ways in which people move in water (*right*, 020-7636 7478; www.coningsbygallery.com)



October 10–25 The Royal Society of British Artists, Geedon Gallery, Fingringhoe, Essex. An exhibition displaying the work of members of the Royal Society of British Artists, one of the oldest art societies in Britain (01206 728587; www.geedongallery.co.uk)

Lecture

October 13 A History of English Punctuation for English Language Day, The Stripe Lecture Theatre, University of Winchester, Sparkford Road, Winchester.

Christopher Mulvey,



Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Winchester, gives this year's English Language Day lecture, addressing issues such as where punctuation comes from and why we should care. Starts at 6.30pm; free admission, but seats must be reserved (<https://englishlanguageaday2015.eventbrite.com>)

Debate

October 14 Greeks versus Romans: A Classics Debate,

Bloomsbury Publishing, 50, Bedford Square, London WC1. COUNTRY LIFE contributors Harry Eyres and Harry Mount go head to head in the ultimate clash of civilisations: who has the great-

est legacy? Debate starts at 6.30pm; tickets from £6 (020-7631 5717; <http://pages.bloomsbury.com/bloomsburyinstitute>)

Country fair

October 10–11 Autumn Countryside Show,



October 10, 1pm–5.30pm. £8, children £1. East Ruston is a garden in which brilliant theatre is fused with garden design on a grand scale and consummate plantsmanship. Well over 20 acres in size, it overflows with mouth-watering plants at any time of year and its enclosures, vistas and borders have something for everyone—from tree ferns to apple walks, herbaceous borders and vegetables. There is a trio of spectacular views to nearby Norfolk coast landmarks such as the Happisburgh lighthouse. Once visited, East Rushton is never forgotten. For more details and information on all open gardens, visit www.ngs.org.uk

Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Singleton, Chichester, West Sussex. A seasonal show featuring traditional working demonstrations, including heavy horses, vintage tractors, steam-powered threshing and rural-craft demonstrations (01243 811348; www.wealddown.co.uk)

Food festival

October 11 Wells Food Festival, Market Square and Recreation Ground, Wells, Somerset. Celebrating the best of Somerset's local produce with an artisan producers' market, street-food stalls and a pop-up tea room (www.wellsfoodfestival.co.uk)

East Ruston Old Vicarage, East Ruston, Norwich NR12 9HN

October 10, 1pm–5.30pm. £8, children £1. East Ruston is a garden in which brilliant theatre is fused with garden design on a grand scale and consummate plantsmanship. Well over 20 acres in size, it overflows with mouth-watering plants at any time of year and its enclosures, vistas and borders have something for everyone—from tree ferns to apple walks, herbaceous borders and vegetables. There is a trio of spectacular views to nearby Norfolk coast landmarks such as the Happisburgh lighthouse. Once visited, East Rushton is never forgotten. For more details and information on all open gardens, visit www.ngs.org.uk

What to drink this week

California Syrah and Petite Sirah



Like their producers, these reds are full of character, says Harry Eyres

You probably don't associate California with Syrah. Aficionados may know of the Rhône Rangers—Randal Graham's Bonny Doon Vineyard and Bob Lindquist's Qupé to name two—and there are a surprising number of acres planted to Syrah in the Golden State, but it plays not second but fourth or fifth fiddle after Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir and Zinfandel. At tastings recently, however, California Syrahs, and their more obscure relative Petite Sirah (aka Durif), have been making an impressive showing. Unlike the top California Cabs, they don't break the bank.

Why you should be drinking them

California Syrahs and Petite Sirahs tend to be made by quirky individualists and the slight eccentricity shows through. The emphasis is on character rather than sophistication. Many come from less-well-known areas—not Napa, but parts of the central coast, from Monterey down to San Luis Obispo.

What to drink

As an introduction, try the Petite Sirah 2012 from the Pali Wine Co in Paso Robles (£12.99; www.cellarandkitchen.adhams.co.uk); this is deep purple in colour with rich damson fruit and thick texture. If you're planning an Indian summer barbecue, look no further. At a higher level, I was hugely impressed by Piedrasassi's Central Coast Syrah PS 2013 (£25/£22 in a case; www.robersonwine.com); the colour is deep, but there's a beautiful, ethereal Côte Rotie-like floral nose and great depth and length. Equally good in a different style is Broc Cellars Santa Lucia Highlands Syrah Cuvée 13.1 2013 (£25/£22 in a case; www.robersonwine.com); bright colour, peppery nose and a most intriguing salty minerality on the palate.



FORGET the Loch Ness monster: the slippery creatures of Northern Ireland are very real and very valued.

Lough Neagh eels have been harvested for years—initially, by local folk in the hope of keeping evil spirits at bay. It's said that they used to be a popular Halloween speciality, when they would be served in chunks and seared in oil and garlic.

Nowadays, the Lough Neagh eel fishery is the largest commercial operation of its kind in Europe. Nearly all the catch—roughly 400 tons a year—is eaten outside the country, with the exception of regular, live deliveries to Billingsgate market in London.

In the spring of 2010, there were fears regarding the future of the industry as the number of elvers returning to Europe's rivers and lakes had been mysteriously dropping. However, at the time, the

Truly scrumptious

Britain's specially protected produce

Lough Neagh eels

Chief Fisheries Officer said Lough Neagh's fishery could continue as it was sustainable, thanks to the efforts

to restock it every year.

The Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-operative Society, which formed in 1965, has exclusive rights to eel fishing in the lough and today's members use methods passed down through generations. *Ellie Hughes*

Illustration by Fiona Osbaldstone



Letters to the Editor



Mark Hedges

Letter of the week

Don't bank on localism

SIR—We understand from the wonderful man who helps us with the garden at our house in a small Somerset village that the only bank in the nearby town (NatWest in Dulverton) is due to close, making it impossible for him to cash cheques on a regular basis. He has a number of elderly clients who are not internet- or telephone-banking savvy and he has continued receiving cheques for as long as possible.

We have been told that there will be a mobile bank stationed in the town on a Tuesday! This means that, for working people like him, who need to cash cheques, they must lose half a day to drive into town and queue for this facility, which will no doubt be very busy if it is limited to one visit per week.

Even though we understand the imperative of the free market, the Government should consider the plight of those living in rural communities and seek to mitigate some of its implications. The last bank in a town should not be allowed to close.

The accommodation could be at the Post Office in the form of universal machines to receive cheques from all major banks, alongside the usual ATMs from which money can be drawn. The technology for both of these is already familiar and in use at individual bank branches. These facilities would help make Post Offices more viable and ensure their continuity in rural locations.

Perhaps some of the returns from the sell off of the RBS and Lloyds shares should be used to fund the installation of these lifeline facilities.

Mr and Mrs
Giles Quarne,
Somerset



The writer of the letter of the week will win a bottle of Pol Roger Brut Réserve Champagne



Is Land Rover forgetting its rural market?

A GROMENES touches on a raw nerve regarding Land Rover and local business (*September 16*). I've just bought my fifth Land Rover, the fourth from new, and, as the Isle of Wight dealer has closed, I'm now faced with having to travel to Portsmouth, an hour or so on the ferry each way, assuming there are no delays. The dealer in Portsmouth is helpful and professional, but, surely, it wouldn't

be too much trouble to have a service agent locally?

I'm left wondering about the sense of one of England's great rural counties—the Isle of Wight—not having a dealer or agent presence from what's still regarded as the iconic British rural-vehicle brand. I'm sure reimbursing my ferry fare makes economic sense, but whether it passes a common sense test, I'm not so sure.

If our supermarkets can



have 'metro' and 'local' stores, then why not our major car manufacturers?

Jessica Garbett, by email

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Let's rock the boat and give it back

WITHOUT doubt, your Clean For The Queen initiative needs to happen (*September 9*). Getting the offenders to mend their ways, however, may be a bit more difficult as, along with laziness, I think that unspent aggression is a problem.

For The Queen's 90th birthday, couldn't the Government give her back what should never have been taken, HMY *Britannia*? There were years of life left in that ship and, furthermore, businessmen could charter her for the clinching of lucrative deals when a bit of swank is called for (you'll never remove vanity from humanity). How about it? *Mrs Chatterton, East Sussex*



How I love a painted (or unpainted) lady



Doug Hall's letter (*September 23*) in response to mine on butterflies (*August 26*) prompted me to view the Butterfly Conservation website, which asks for sightings of the hummingbird hawk moth (*above*) and the painted lady. I'm glad to say that I've recorded both in my garden this September.

There are more than 30 species of butterfly often seen on Exmoor. At 85 years old, I have discovered a new hobby; I also enjoy the company of unpainted ladies of 30 years and upwards, in addition to that of my young 76-year-old wife.

Commander David Aldrich

Austen's hidden wit

H ELENA KENNEDY and I share many grounds of agreement (*Letters, September 23*), but she mistakes my premises about *Mansfield Park*. I am not suggesting that Jane Austen was a social realist or a simple allegorist, so it matters not that Mansfield Park is a 'modern-built house' and that Castle Ashby was begun in 1592; rather, I suggest that Austen gives her fictional house the same geographical location as Ashby to connect her narrative and moral concerns with those of Spencer Perceval, the Prime Minister.

It is a loose association, but telling—and the technique is similar to learned wit; Austen wrote to her niece Anna about putting witty references into fictitious place names just four months after the novel was published.

The same logic has been discussed by Laurie Kaplan in *Emma*, which Austen was required to dedicate to the loathsome Prince Regent and in which Austen has John and Isabella Knightly live in Brunswick Square, named after the Regent's despised wife. It's a bone intended to stick in the Regent's throat. Other critics have agreed that there's a great deal of such witty play in Austen's writing. It is an extension of her irony. Robert Clark, London

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Bee-ware the hornet

I WAS watching a large clump of sedum in the sun this afternoon. There was a number of the usual autumn butterflies—red admirals, peacocks, small tortoiseshells and commas—on the flowers, together with a great number of medium-sized and small bumblebees.

Suddenly, a very aggressive hornet appeared and swooped about, attacking the bumblebees. It appeared to be trying to sting them and was flying very fast for several minutes. The bees didn't appear worried, but certainly tried to avoid the raider. Could this be a reason for the decline in bumblebees? That said, we are certainly not short of them

here. The hornets are, however, more numerous and they appear hungry.

*Jonathan Reeves,
Radnorshire*



Call for photographs

AS a tribute to those who devoted their lives to working on the land, an attempt is being made to gather together photographs of country people working in the landscape from 1900–69.

It is planned to use only previously unpublished photographs from family collections to create a book recalling the atmosphere in fields, woods and villages across the land. Bringing these pictures into the light should highlight some of the unseen patterns of life in the British countryside at an earlier time.

If any readers can help, please contact Ian Hunter Darling at Priorswood Farm, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire GL2 7DJ, telephone 01453 810150, or email annupapple@btinternet.com.

Ian Hunter Darling, Gloucestershire

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Home truths for food faddists

WHO'S to blame for obesity? As it is neither politically convenient nor politically correct to blame ourselves, we must find someone else to carry the can. Fast food, processed food, sugar in food, fat in food, carbonated drinks, fruit juices, eating out, eating in—the list of excuses is almost endless. One new report in the US even suggests that people become fat if they eat with their children, which, of course, contradicts almost all previous advice, which stated that people became fat if they ate on their own! No wonder the consumer is increasingly confused. The demonisation of the food industry, and, by extension, our farmers, has begun to seriously distort attitudes to the countryside and the whole business of food production upon which it depends. That's why Agromenes has produced his Seven Facts for Food Faddists.

1. We get fat because we eat too much

Michael Winner got it right when he said that, after a lifetime of trying every kind of diet, he discovered the answer was smaller portions. Our dinner plates and our wine glasses are much bigger than those of our forefathers. Yet our farmers would be much better off if they were encouraged to produce less, but better, for people who ate less and expected better.

2. It's calories that count

Neither sugar nor fat is the sole culprit—it's calories that matter, not the source. When fat was the enemy, 'low fat' became a synonym for 'sugar filled'. Now, many people are so busy avoiding sugar that they ignore the fat.

3. Most people don't need to go gluten-free

Significant profits are being made by companies producing gluten-free products for people who don't need them. *Real* coeliacs have a serious problem that they need to address, but companies have

made very good business promoting these foods to people who don't have an allergy at all and then charging them a premium price in the process.

4. Almost anything in excess can do you harm

Farmers have been encouraged to farm for quantity, even in a country where almost everyone eats too much. Recovering a sense of the value of the food we eat and producing it with respect for animals and the soil would transform British agriculture for the better.

5. There are no superfoods

Down the ages, people have made fortunes suggesting that they possessed the elixir of life. Exotic berries from distant places or large quantities of beetroot may contribute to your 'five a day', but they won't ensure you live to be 100.

‘Exotic berries from distant places will not ensure that you live to be 100’

6. Food faddism is big business

Food companies are under attack and the horse-meat scandal reminded us that there is fraud and malpractice that touches even well-known names. But food faddists are in business, too, whether it's to promote their latest book or sell their diets or herbal supplements. A healthy agriculture meets real needs, not fads and passing fashions.

7. Calories aren't easy to walk off

The idea that a quick trot to the other side of a field will make up for another large ice cream may please some, but it's not enough to work off many calories. If we ate more moderately, we could afford to insist on the best from our farmers and to pay a proper price for the food they produce.

These seven facts won't make headlines, but they could change the way we live—immeasurably and for the better.



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Cornets and pianos

AUTUMN, in my part of Derbyshire, means waking to great billowing mists. The white clouds rise up the valley from the Derwent and envelop us on the hilltop. This gradually clears to a sullen grey stillness, followed—when everyone's completely given up on the weather—by blazing golden sunshine just before sundown. I usually get this right in the eye as I drive down to the swimming pool after a long day's toil at the literary coalface.

‘There was only one flavour and no waffle-cone nonsense here’

Summer seems to have gone with a snap of the fingers—and what a very lovely one it was. The Derbyshire summer seems more vigorous than other counties', perhaps because it rains so much up here. The hawthorn in June looks like unseasonal heavy snow, the July fields and trees are a brilliant neon green and the moors in August a powerful purple edged with bright-pink willowherb.

Until this year, the moor near us had the additional summer attraction of the ice-cream lady. Parked, come rain or shine, in the entrance to a bridleway, her ancient 'Mr Cornish' van was the quintessential retro vehicle. Pale blue, lemon yellow and sporting sun-faded lettering, it looked like a background to the Boden catalogue or an entry for the Turner Prize.

The inside was carpeted with cardboard and there 'Mrs Cornish' would sit, a redoubtable octogenarian in black stirrup leggings, her brightly dyed blonde hair in a chignon, reading the *Daily Express* and waiting for customers.

Once they came, it was the customers who were waiting. The queues could be very long. Like all great artists, Mrs Cornish took her time plastering her delicious vanilla ice cream (there was only one flavour) into cornets (only one type; no waffle-cone nonsense here). There would follow some confusion over strawberry sauce and even more confusion over the bill. As Mrs Cornish repeatedly totted it up, getting a different figure every time, the melting ice cream ran all over your wrists.

The last time I saw her, last summer, I had some Californian friends staying and took them to pay homage at the shrine. Mrs Cornish was far from happy; she had forgotten her lunch and was sitting there on the moor with only ice-cream cones to eat. Fortunately, I'd over-catered for our outing and had some spare ham sandwiches. I handed them over and she reciprocated in kind, obligingly posing for a photograph for the Palo Alto smartphones.

The image later came winging back across the herring pond in one of those amazing Apple Mac albums people sometimes make after they've stayed with you. Mrs Cornish, brandishing a bouquet of vanilla 99s, looks absolutely splendid and quite the way I'm sure she'd like to be remembered, wherever she now is. There is another ice-cream van on her spot now, so I don't think she's coming back.

Although some changes, like that one, are sad, others are rather fun. I am, for instance, a big fan of the fashion for putting pianos in public places, mainly because they bring out the urge to perform in children who, like mine, can otherwise take some persuading to the practice stool. Exercises and pieces



It is a truth universally acknowledged that no one can eat a 99 without ice cream dripping down their wrist

that seem boring and repetitive at home take on a whole new glamorous light in the context of these railway Joannas. The children will happily play all afternoon while people trundle past with their suitcases.

Sheffield station, local to me, has recently got itself a piano and, on a trip there not long ago, my 12-year-old peeled off from me and my daughter. Seconds later, he was belting out *The Entertainer* to a gathering crowd, who greeted his efforts with cheers and applause. Flushed with success, we headed into town, only to discover, some

20 minutes later, that the young Arthur Rubinstein had left his lunch atop the instrument. We had to make a somewhat inglorious return, but, thankfully, the comestibles were present and correct.

One of my favourite cities is York and my favourite thing in it is the Minster. I love to sit in the nave and stare at the colourfully painted stone shields above the arches and in the triforium windows. The nave ones represent Edward I's supporters, who came with him to York en route to hammering the Scots. The window ones belong to the barons of Edward II, who made the same trip with their king, for the same reason, only to fail even more conclusively.

Bannockburn, 1314, was a very long time ago. But, in somewhere as ancient as York Minster, it seems relatively close.

On a visit last week, I was able to make it seem still closer when, realising I was never going to see all the glorious shield detail with the naked eye, I slipped out to Argos for some binoculars.

Armed with super-strong zoom features, I returned and spent a blissful couple of hours examining bends, chevrons, labels and lions rampant, as well as some pictorial panels in which evilly grinning Devils were stirring people in boiling pots. As it was impossible to see any of this from floor level (without binoculars), I was left wondering whether medieval peasants, for all their nasty, brutish and short lives, were compensated with spectacularly good eyesight.



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My favourite painting Tom Helme

Landscape with Farmhouse by William Nicholson



Tom Helme is an interior designer and former Advisor on Decoration to the National Trust. He is the creator of the original Farrow & Ball colours and co-founder of the fabrics and accessories company Fermoie

The oil is small and painted on the back of a cigar box, giving a different look to canvas, which I love. Choice of materials and method are fundamental to success in all creation, just as mystery plays a part in beauty. Nicholson started painting this picture standing in the landscape, with one hand open to the end of a British landscape tradition. What is exciting is the tentative finger pointing forward to the abstract. The way the farmhouse is described as a single flat shape continues to hold my admiration. How and where pictures are hung either allows them to radiate or closes them down. This one, my favourite, hangs in our boyish set in Piccadilly under tight stairs and is viewed at a distance of 1ft when sitting on the mahogany thunderbox. Perfect!



Landscape with Farmhouse, 1892, by William Nicholson (1872–1949), 8in by 9¾in, Private Collection

John McEwen comments on *Landscape with Farmhouse*

FATHER of the more famous Ben' remains William Nicholson's unworthy lot, although Patricia Reed's 2011 catalogue raisonné of the paintings endorses that other scholar Tim Hilton's assessment: 'Ben still gets more attention [and higher prices], but William is more loved.'

Nicholson was born at Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire. His father ran the family industrial firm and was briefly the town's Conservative MP. As a teenager, Nicholson had painting lessons from a local artist, the septuagenarian William Cubley, and particularly enjoyed their country sketching trips.

At 16, he joined the academician Hubert von Herkomer's art school at Bushey, near Watford, where he met a Scottish student, Mabel Pryde, whose brother James, six years his senior, was already an artistic success. This was a definitive moment. In 1893, he married Mabel and,

in 1894, formed the printmaking partnership J. & W. Beggarstaff with his brother-in-law, which made his name.

After leaving Herkomer, he briefly attended the Académie Julian in Paris. In the census of that year, he described himself as an artist, aged 27, although he was only 19 and had never sold a picture; a disdain for form filling lasted a lifetime.

This landscape, one of his earliest surviving pictures, dates from his return to Newark from France, when he lived with his parents and had a studio in the garden. Many years later, he gave it to his former mistress and housekeeper, Marie Laquelle, at which point the signature and heavy varnish were probably added. Laquelle seems to have been a teasing endearment of Nicholson's—'Marie laquelle?'—adopted by Marie. It was never her legal name.



A stone continued chimneypiece demonstrating the combination of Palladian and Neo Classical detailing which we used throughout this new Country House.

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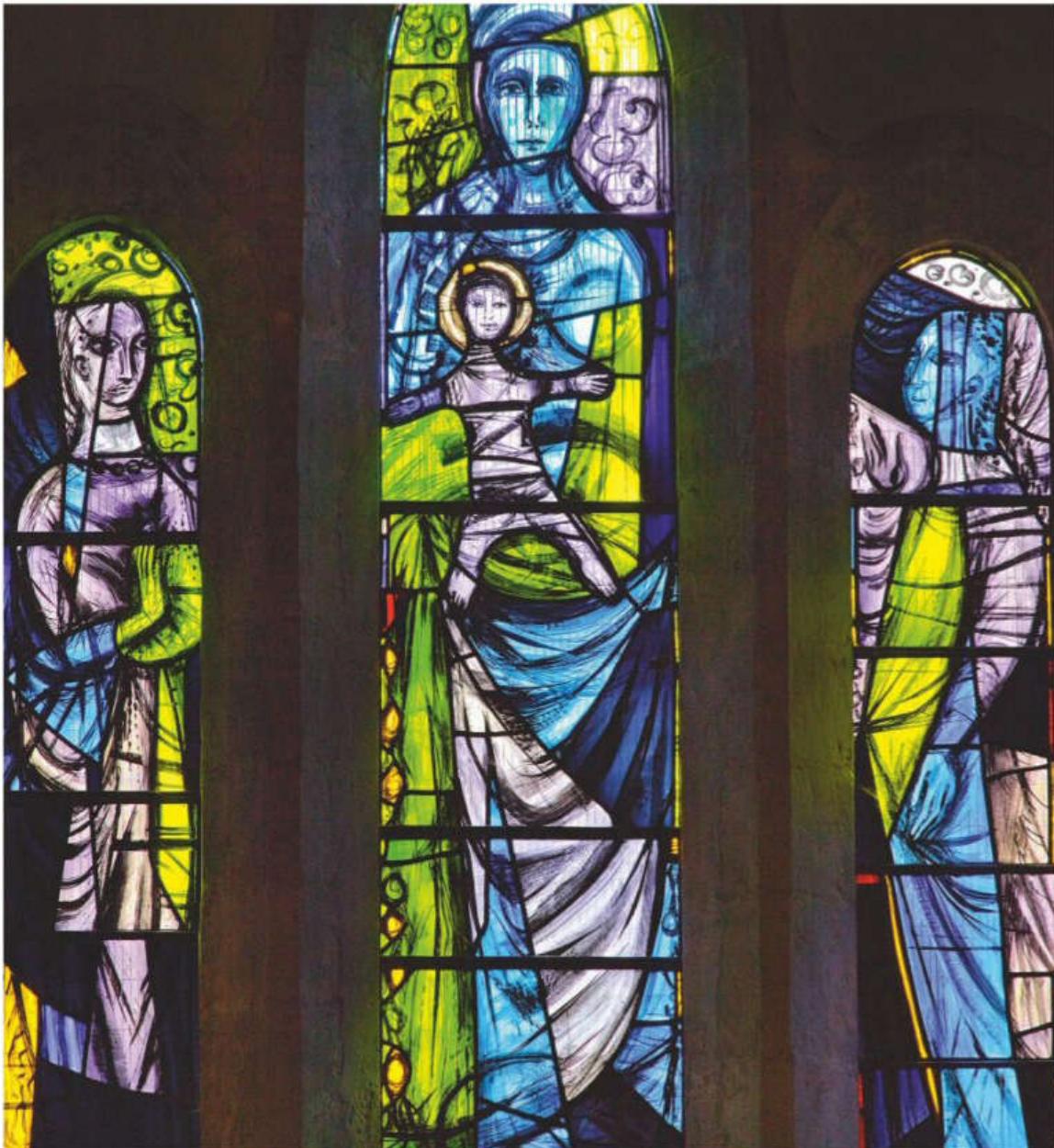
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Parish church treasures

Ghostly reality

Photography by Paul Barker and text by John Goodall

A book of the series will be published tomorrow



THE east window of the small medieval church of Hound contains an arresting stained-glass window made in 1958–9 by the artist Patrick Reyntiens. Its three unequal lights present the figure of the Virgin and Child flanked by angels. The palette of colour—with an overwhelming predominance of blue and green glass (but with touches of yellow and red)—is both unexpected and serene. With its thin leading lines and relatively large constituent panels, the overall effect is of a bold and abstract mosaic of light.

Never precisely defined, but suggested within this by folds of drapery and contrasts in colour, are the forms of the figures. Their



The Church of
St Mary, Hound,
Hampshire

ghostly reality is part of the appeal of the window. The Virgin faces the viewer and the two angels seem almost to be walking around her. The only clearly defined figure is that of Christ, who is represented with his arms and legs splayed wide.

Reyntiens made this window while working on the stained glass of Coventry Cathedral (1957–61) with John Piper, with whom he collaborated for more than 30 years. Some of his later windows are in a very different idiom, however. Particularly notable is this respect is the large west window of Southwell Minster in Nottinghamshire, completed in 1996 with the architect Martin Stancliffe.



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A shot in the arm for October

HERE are one or two plants in the garden that give rise to differences of opinion when it comes to pronunciation. Cam-ell-ee-a or cam-ee-lee-a? Clem-a-tiss or cleemay-tiss? I really don't mind at all, as long as both plants feature in my beds and borders (or, in the case of camellias, tubs of ericaceous compost, as I garden on chalk). There's one other name that causes confusion and which is a real stalwart in a sunny border at the foot of our house wall at the moment: nerine.

I have always felt that it deserved more than the sobriquet it's most frequently given: ner-een, which sounds a little too much like Doreen for my taste. There is nothing wrong with Doreen, of course, but it doesn't exactly have a queenly ring and nerine is certainly a queen of the autumn garden, which is why I have always pronounced its name as nee-rye-nee.

Sitting on my bookshelf is a tiny volume I acquired many years ago: *Pronunciation of Plant Names*. It was published by *The Gardeners' Chronicle* in 1909 and yes, nee-rye-nee it is.

Well, regardless of what you call it, nerine relishes a sunny, well-drained border. Our clumps grow on the south side of the house in a sun-drenched border right up against the house wall, but when I first planted them, I made the mistake of putting them towards the back of the border, where I thought they would benefit from the comparative



Tickled pink: *Nerine bowdenii* is a stalwart of the autumn border

warmth of the wall in winter. This turned out to be a mistake, for what nerines really like is the sun baking their bulbs.

Towards the back of the border, they were overwhelmed by the foliage of other plants during the summer and their flowering capacity was reduced as a result.

Nerines dislike being moved—once they're settled in, they will

flower happily and increase their clump size for years if left undisturbed—but, in this instance, shifting them was essential and they didn't seem to mind at all. They now sit right at the front of the border with their noses poking out of the soil and I make sure that, in summer, no vigorous neighbours flop over them and deprive them of light and air.

Nerine bowdenii is the one most frequently found in gardens and in all except cold, exposed areas, this species seems to do really well. I have pots of *N. sarniensis* that I grow in the greenhouse that come in a wide range of colours, from crimson and magenta, through pink to pure white, but this is a more tender species that needs the protection of cool glass in winter, as it will perish out in the open.

N. bowdenii is usually grown in its familiar shocking-pink form;

a brighter, jollier colour for the autumn garden you could not wish to find. But for those of a more Farrow & Ball turn of mind, there is the cultivar Alba, which is white. Isabel is a rather darker pinkish-magenta.

The bright-green, strap-shaped leaves follow the flowers and usually die away in midsummer heat, although, this year, as in most summers where rainfall is plentiful, they remain the whole year round.

Grow nerines in containers if you like. They will be happy in the same terracotta pot for several years and can be moved on (using John Innes No. 2 with added grit) only when they threaten to climb out of it or split its sides. The advantage here is that you can allow the compost to become rather drier in summer, so that the foliage dies back and the flowers emerge in late summer and early autumn, untrammelled by the welter of green leaves.

Take care that the pots are protected from severe frosts in winter as, standing above ground, they will be that much more susceptible to freezing temperatures, which may well turn the bulbs to pulp. A cold frame is a good precaution.

For me, in either situation, they are one of the greatest delights of the October garden and a real shot in the arm when it comes to brilliance.

An evening with Alan

The National Gardens Scheme is launching its Annual Lecture at the Royal Geographical Society with a talk by gardener and broadcaster Alan Titchmarsh on Tuesday, October 27 at 7pm.

Tickets for the lecture cost £20 and all proceeds go to the National Gardens Scheme. Doors open at 6pm and drinks are available before the lecture. To order tickets, go to www.ngs.org.uk/lecture and quote CLNG15.

Next week: Rose cuttings

Horticultural aide memoire

No. 41: Order bulbs

You will by now have planted your daffodils for next year, as they like to get their feet in the ground in late summer. The broader question of tulips and their relations now arises. There is no shortage of choice. Before you start putting ticks next to pictures, consider first the site—in beds or pots, against what background—and master the general principles of height and season, as these vary considerably. Then, decide on the flower form: Darwin, lily-flowered, parrot, double and so forth. You will have certain favourites, but also try something new. **SCD**



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A house of personalities

Lamport Hall, Northamptonshire

From an outstanding collection of family papers, there emerges a vivid impression of the personalities that shaped this country house, as John Goodall explains

Photographs by Paul Barker

ON January 13, 1560, the London merchant John Isham purchased the manor of Lamport for £610. His was a well-trodden path of 16th-century social advancement, whereby mercantile wealth from the City served as a passport to landed patrimony and gentility. A striking portrait of Isham—richly dressed and formidably bearded, gesturing towards a skull—confronts the modern visitor as they enter the house today.

The introduction is apposite not merely because he and his descendants

created the present house, but because the Isham family history—through the medium of an unusually full archive—can be so fulsomely fleshed out with memorable personalities.

Following his purchase of Lamport, John Isham appears to have set about the complete reorganisation of the property. According to his son, Thomas, 'he aplyed himselfe to plantinge, buildinge, making of pooles, including of groundes and all other woorks of good husbandry as if he had been brought up to them from his infansy'. As completed, the new house

comprised a dominating hall with ranges for services and withdrawing chambers to either end. It is possible that these buildings were arranged on an essentially medieval plan incorporating the remains of yet earlier buildings.

Thomas, who succeeded to his father's estate in 1596, was blind from the age of 14 and a scholarly recluse. He also collected an exceptional library. Many unique Elizabethan editions from it were sold off after they were sensational rediscovered in a lumber room in 1867. His son, John, further



enlarged the family fortune through marriage. John was knighted in 1608, served as High Sheriff of the county in 1610–11 and was elevated to a baronetcy in 1627.

A compelling picture of family life at Lamport is provided in this period by one of Sir John's daughters, Elizabeth, born in January 1609. She wrote an autobiography inspired in part by St Augustine's *Confessions*. A transcription of this chronological account of her life, which runs to about 50,000 words, is available online at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/projects/isham>. She avoided marriage and, after her mother's death, ran her father's household.

Elizabeth's brother, Justinian, became the 2nd Baronet in 1651 and, like his father, was a determined Royalist. His character was given a memorably damning description by one prospective bride, Dorothy Osborne. 'The Emperor' as she dubbed him, was, upon acquaintance, 'the vainest, Impertinent, self conceited, Learned, Coxcombe, that ever yet I saw... for

Fig 1: The west front of the house incorporates Webb's 1650s block as its centrepiece. It has had a variety of different pediments added to it over time. To either side are the wings added by the Smiths. Visible to the left is the church

‘The 10th baronet, Charles, inherited in 1846 and cut an unusual figure as a vegetarian fascinated by the supernatural’

his sake I shall take heed of a fine Gentleman as long as I live’.

Whatever the justice of this judgement, Sir Justinian was intensely interested in the Arts and natural sciences (and was an early member of the Royal Society). In 1654–5, with the help of John Webb, the pupil and relative by marriage of the architect Inigo Jones, he extended Lamport. A quantity of correspondence between the two men survives. Webb was on familiar terms with his client and there are tantalising references to his

concurrent projects, including related work to Chevening, Kent (*COUNTRY LIFE*, February 29, 2012) and Belvoir, Leicestershire, as well as to a proposed mausoleum attached to Lampart church that was never built.

Webb's addition created a second frontage to the building in the form of a projecting two-storey block. Hitherto, in conventional form, the hall with its porch had formed the main façade of the Tudor house. This faced northwards towards the nearby church. Webb now extended the west-facing frontage of the withdrawing range at right angles to this. The design of the façade to the extension was evidently the object of debate between patron and architect. On June 19, 1654, Webb wrote, offering a revised design 'with a portico added which you may take or leave at pleasure, though I am for it, it being a great ornament and much useful. I will so order it that it shall not appeare temple like'.

In the event, Sir Justinian evidently demurred, however, and the new ➤

OSTENDO NON OSTENTO





building was more plainly completed. The main front was rusticated throughout its two storeys and was five bays wide with a central door and pedimented lower windows (*Fig 1*). There was also a central pediment, a feature that has been repeatedly altered over time. This kind of doll's-house frontage may seem unremarkable, but, in the 1650s, it represented the acme of cosmopolitan sophistication.

Significantly, it was also intended to read from the outside as a free-standing structure and early views show that it overlooked a narrow garden defined to either side by tall hedges that screened out the remainder of the house.

The front door gave access to a splendid two-storey 'great room', the volume of which is preserved in the present interior of the house (*Fig 2*). Curiously, this is entered through the main door set towards one end of the room in the manner of a medieval hall. It is dominated by a magnificent fireplace, for which Webb's drawings survive. In a letter dated April 6, 1655, he desired the lower part of the

chimney to be of Weldon stone and the upper rather 'of joyners worke than plaster for it will stand much nearer and not be so subject to casualties as plaster, yet plaster will be cheaper'. It was executed as he wished.

Several other drawings for the interior of the room survive, including designs for an austere plaster ceiling and the wall elevations. The latter show niches with full-length figures made of wax by the sculptor Andreas Kearne. Beyond the 'great room' was a parlour and also a new grand stair. Much of the stair has survived, although in a reconfigured form. It originally gave access not only to new upper rooms created by Webb but communicated with the Tudor parlour and great chamber. In this sense, Webb's addition upgraded and improved the existing arrangements of the house.

Sir Justinian died in 1675 and was succeeded to the baronetcy by his son, Thomas, who is celebrated for writing a diary in Latin from 1671 that provides a glimpse of everyday life on the estate. Sir Thomas reordered

Fig 2 facing page: Webb's 'great room'. The 1650s proportions of the room, which rises through two storeys, are preserved in the present interior. So, too, is Webb's fireplace of stone and timber—the plaster dates to 1738

Fig 3 above: The library added by Smith of Warwick. The bookcases were installed in 1819

the hall frontage towards the road and church, enclosing it within a spacious courtyard created by two long stable ranges. The work of slating the new buildings was completed in November 1680. More important were the changes made by his brother and heir, another Sir Justinian, who succeeded in 1681. Five years later, he began to refit the house. Several rooms were wainscoted, including the 'great room' and fitted with sash windows, a type of fenestration that was rapidly growing in popularity.

Towards the end of his life, in 1727, Sir Justinian began work to a new rectory—an eye-catching building that overlooks the village street—for his son, the incumbent of the village. His choice of architect was the famously reliable Francis Smith of Warwick and was to prove important. This project—which was still incomplete when the Baronet died in 1730—must explain why his successor, Sir Justinian, 5th Baronet, turned to 'Smith of Warwick' for alterations to the main house. ➤



*Fig 4 above:
The main stair,
reconfigured
after 1818 as
part of Henry
Hakewill's
changes to
the house.
Fragments
of the 1650s
stair survive
as a balustrade
to the stairwell*

*Fig 5 above
right: The south
side of the
house with
Hakewill's
bowed porch
of 1821 and, to
the right, Henry
Goddard's 1848
Tudor range.
An arched
loggia formerly
existed under-
neath the wing
to the left*

Smith of Warwick's overarching idea (as represented in an undated drawing) was to turn Webb's projecting block into the centrepiece of a much wider façade by the addition of two symmetrical side wings. The wings were added in sequence, the north—including a library (*Fig 3*) and parlour—in 1732 and the south in 1741. As Sir Justinian and Smith of Warwick died in 1737 and 1738 respectively, part of this work was actually executed by Smith's son, William, for the 6th Baronet, Sir Edmund.

The construction of the wings was accompanied by other important changes to the building. Space for the north wing was created by demolishing the Tudor withdrawing range and a section of the old hall. Most of the principal interiors were redecorated. Most striking in this respect is the 'great room', which was transformed by a virtuous display of decorative plasterwork by John Woolston of Northampton. The relevant bill, dated September 7, 1738, refers to '7 heads as big as life... 6 pieces of trophies... 6 swans and eagles and 2 large pieces of ornament adorned with sea god and goddess taking a swan with shells' and came to £200.



Sir Edmund also employed Smith in the complete reconstruction of the parish church, with its magnificent collection of family memorials. The rebuilding was funded by a bequest of £500 made by the terms of his father's will and is consciously medieval in flavour. It preserves more fine plasterwork by Woolston and a splendid Communion table (*COUNTRY LIFE*, July 8, 2015).

There were further improvements to the house in the 1770s, but the present building is more clearly shaped today by the 19th century.

From 1818, with the accession of Sir Justinian to the baronetcy, there began a steady flow of changes. Under the direction of the architect Henry Hakewill, the north front of the house was demolished and rebuilt in 1821. The main stair was reconfigured (*Fig 4*) and, in 1828, the southern garden front was reconstructed with a portico. This change, which created a billiard room in the house, was followed in 1842 by the reconstruction of the adjacent range by Henry Goddard of Leicester (*Fig 5*).

The 10th baronet, Charles, inherited the estate in 1846 and cut an unusual figure as a vegetarian and Spiritualist fascinated by the supernatural. He commissioned the architect William Burn to redesign the northern entrance front with its large porch. In the course of Burn's work, the last substantial fragments of the Tudor house were lost.

Sir Charles added family mottoes to the great room and the west front. He also invested enormous energy in the improvement of the garden. His most famous addition to it was a rockery begun in 1847 and populated by small sculptures of dwarfs, the

origin of the modern garden gnome.

After losing his wife in 1898, Sir Charles made over Lampart to his cousin and heir, Vere Isham. The property was then leased out to the Society couple Lord and Lady Ludlow in 1907–14. Despite their relatively short tenancy, they made sweeping changes to the interior. With a view to the hunting, they created the vast new stable yard in 1907 and installed the neo-Jacobean Oak Room, using panelling purchased from Bayhall House, Kent, following its demolition in 1908.

In 1931, Sir Vere Isham handed over Lampart to his son, Gyles, who inherited the title as 12th Baronet a decade later while on active service in the Second World War. On his return, the combined effects of occupation by the army and then Italian prisoners of war had left the house and grounds in a parlous condition. Heroically, and over three decades, he returned things to order in stages. Initially, the house was divided, with one part occupied by the Northamptonshire Record Office. This withdrew by 1960, with the family papers in its keeping.

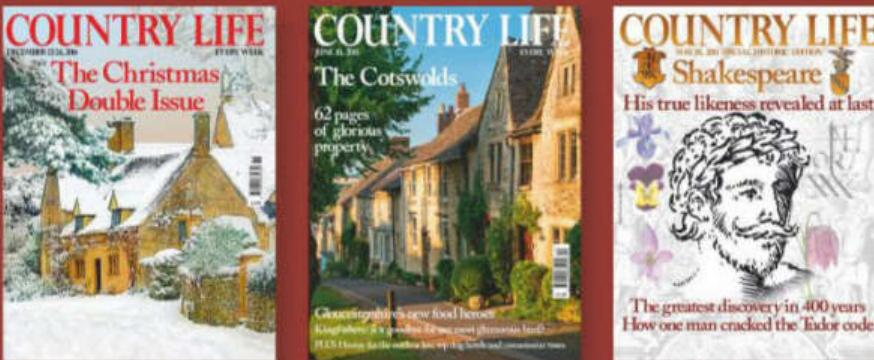
Sir Gyles had no direct heirs and, in 1974, he founded the Lampart Hall Preservation Trust to look after the estate, house and its contents for the nation. The trust, which celebrated its 40th anniversary last year, has pushed forward the work of restoring the building and its gardens. In the past few years, several new rooms have been represented and work to the garden has been gathering pace. The achievement to date is both remarkable and inspiring.

*Acknowledgements: Bruce Bailey
For further information, visit www.lamparthall.co.uk*

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Take me to the river

Llanover, Monmouthshire

A tributary of the River Usk feeds into and invigorates the gardens of a gentrified Monmouthshire farmhouse, bringing beauty, light and watery music right through the grounds, finds Helena Attlee

Photographs by Alex Ramsay

IT'S damp in South Wales. Not unpleasantly so, but enough to ensure that the stream in the garden of Llanover in Monmouthshire is generally full and fast moving. Rhyd-y-meirch, which translates from Welsh as a stallion's ford or crossing place, is its name and its bright water comes straight from two springs in the Brecon Beacons, just a few miles west of the garden.

Water has been a vital element of Llanover's garden ever since Benjamin Waddington, a clergyman's son from Nottinghamshire, bought the estate in 1792. He transformed Ty Uchaf, a simple stone farmhouse, into a much grander



In the heart of the gardens lies Ty Uchaf, formerly a simple stone farmhouse, which was transformed into a substantial Georgian-style house with a brick façade after it was acquired by Benjamin Waddington in 1792. It sits in a wondrously watery setting

building by adding a brick-built Georgian façade, creating both the park and garden that surround it today and planting vast quantities of trees on the estate.

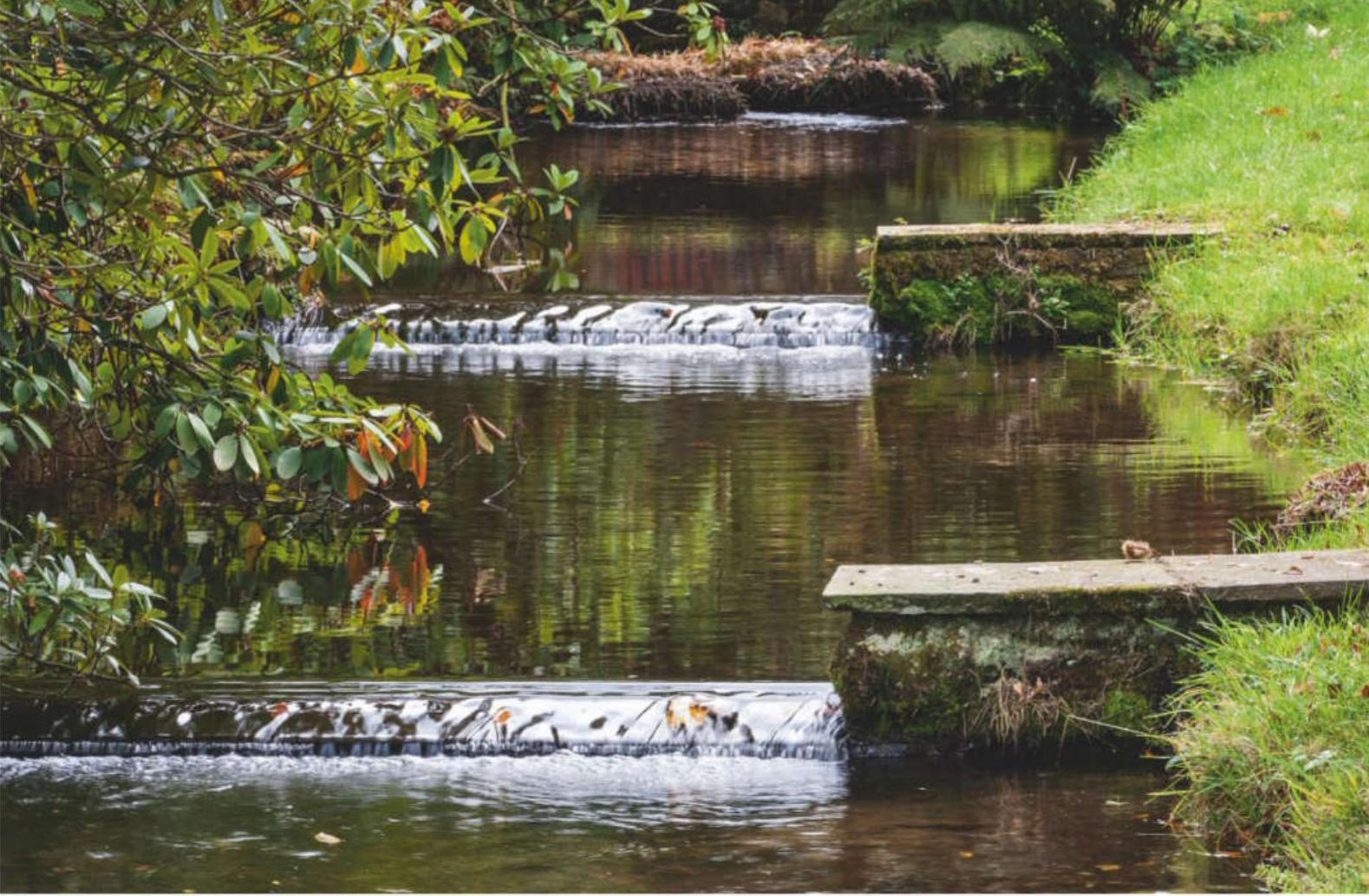
The house is still home to Waddington's descendants, Elizabeth Murray and her children, who are the seventh and eighth generations of the family to live there. Mrs Murray remembers when fresh water from the stream was piped directly into the house and she drank it throughout her childhood. 'The water ran through old pipework,' she recalls, 'and, eventually, my father had it tested for lead, only to discover it was full of *E. coli*.' Although they were never ill as children, she

‘Rhyd-y-meirch arrives as it always has, tumbling eagerly under the road on the garden’s northern boundary’

attributes the extraordinary resilience of her digestion when travelling in India to this early training.

Today, the water is treated, but Rhyd-y-meirch still arrives as it always has, tumbling eagerly through a bridge under the road on the garden's northern boundary. The stream is a tributary of the River Usk and, although very tiny, it has attracted the attention of the Wye and Usk Foundation, a charity committed to conserving fish, animal and plant life on the two rivers.

Like so many tributaries of the Usk, Rhyd-y-meirch is channelled over a weir as it passes beneath the road bridge, an arrangement that protects the structure from water ➤



erosion. However, the steep weir presents an almost insurmountable obstacle to salmon migrating upstream to spawn. The foundation believes that barriers of this kind account for diminishing stocks of trout and salmon on the Usk, so, between 2012 and 2013, the charity built a fish ladder beside the weir, a narrow zigzag staircase designed to give fish an easy passage.

The stream is in a rush to join the river and, on the outskirts of the garden, it hurries along a shallow bed past swathes of gunnera and through the arboretum. Waddington planted many trees and some of his magnificent beeches and towering London planes still survive, but, in the arboretum, the trees were planted predominantly by Mrs Murray's father, Robin Herbert, who was president of the RHS.

Many were chosen for autumn colour and, in October, the stream becomes a blur of moving reds and golds, sometimes carrying a cargo of scarlet maple leaves, and sometimes the fox-bright needles from a golden larch (*Pseudolarix amabilis*).

The low curve of a stone bridge marks the end of freedom for the stream and the beginning of a more disciplined existence. Grassy banks are replaced by sturdy walls just

‘In October,
the stream
becomes a blur
of moving reds
and golds ,’

beyond the bridge, where it divides. The main body continues along the garden boundary in a deep stone-lined canal and a lesser flow is lured off to the left, where a sluice gate controls the head of a tiny tributary. And from now on, the sound of water in the garden is subtly modulated by different arrangements of stones on the streambeds.

‘Most people like to play around with water,’ admits Peter Hall as he opens the sluice, augmenting the water that hurtles down the narrow tributary and over a series of weirs to a circular pool. Formerly head gardener for the National Trust at Powis Castle, Mr Hall was not intending to take on another garden, yet the lure of this 18th-century system of streams, pools and cascades was irresistible, as was the potential for planting in their damp hinterland.

Autumn is already well under way, but, in summer, the pool creates ideal >

Above: Water hurtles over a series of weirs before it reaches a circular pool further into the garden. Elsewhere, a narrow, zig-zag staircase ‘fish ladder’ helps returning salmon find an easier passage. Below: On the outskirts, the stream hurries under beeches, past *Gunnera manicata*. Facing page: Narcissistic grasses and *Cleome spinosa*







‘The low curve of a stone bridge marks the beginning of a more disciplined existence’

conditions for algae that threaten to transform the limpid spring water into opaque slurry, disrupt its flow and block sluices and filters. The problem was quickly resolved this year by a couple of bales of barley straw dropped into the water below the sluice gate. As it decomposes, the straw releases hydrogen peroxide. Water passing through it carries tiny quantities of the chemical into the pool, where it inhibits the growth of algae. Mr Hall is delighted by the practicality of a system that allowed them to isolate the pool, supplying it only with water passing through the straw.

Water from the upper pool rushes down an artificial cascade, its sparkling flow made noisier and more dramatic by mossy boulders inserted to interrupt it. A sickle-shaped pool below forms the southern boundary of Waddington's walled garden, an unusual elliptical space at the heart of the design. The



stream hurries across it, leaving again through a handsome arch in the brick wall and disappearing down a narrow rill, crossed and crossed again by simple flagstone bridges. It makes an island of the lawn beside the house, dividing yet again before a final reunion of all three strands at the far end of the garden.

Mrs Murray's grandparents built a concrete swimming pool between the house and the curved garden wall. Next year, she plans to clear it and replant with a rich palette of water-loving plants such as astilbes, filipendulas, irises, hostas, primulas and meconopsis. A sluice gate in the lower pool will make it possible to send water rushing into this new

bog garden or provide a trickle to keep it damp throughout the year.

No designer has ever been associated with the garden that lies beyond the bridge and perhaps Waddington himself sent Rhyd-y-meirch darting and cascading among his newly planted trees. The landscape created by this combination of manipulated water and tranquil groves seems to encapsulate the intentions of Humphry Repton, that hero of 18th-century landscape architecture, who always tried to find ‘the happy medium betwixt the wilderness of nature and the stiffness of art’.

Group visits, lunches and talks by appointment—email elizabeth@llanover.com or visit www.llanovergarden.co.uk

Above and left:
Among the many interesting treatments of the stream is an artificial cascade that fizzes and sparkles; its flow is made noisier and more dramatic by the arrangement of mossy boulders, inserted to interrupt the water's course.

Facing page:
There are numerous convenient footbridges throughout the garden as the water flows through much of it via two fast-running channels



In a particularly dismal suburb of Glastonbury—all kerbs and sodium lights—there is a road sign that, throughout my Somerset childhood, always caught my eye. It bears a single word: ‘Avalon’. For years, I assumed it was a cruel joke: how, in the name of Merlin and Excalibur, could such a place be connected with King Arthur’s legend? And yet, in my mind, I simultaneously held—hold—another view of Glastonbury. It’s from the A39 Wells road as it snakes down off the Mendips. On autumn mornings, with the Somerset Levels hidden beneath a sea of fog, just the Tor is left floating above. Did someone question the whereabouts of Avalon? Such is the effect of a little mist.

‘These clouds are so low that we’re granted the surreal experience of being able to walk through them,’

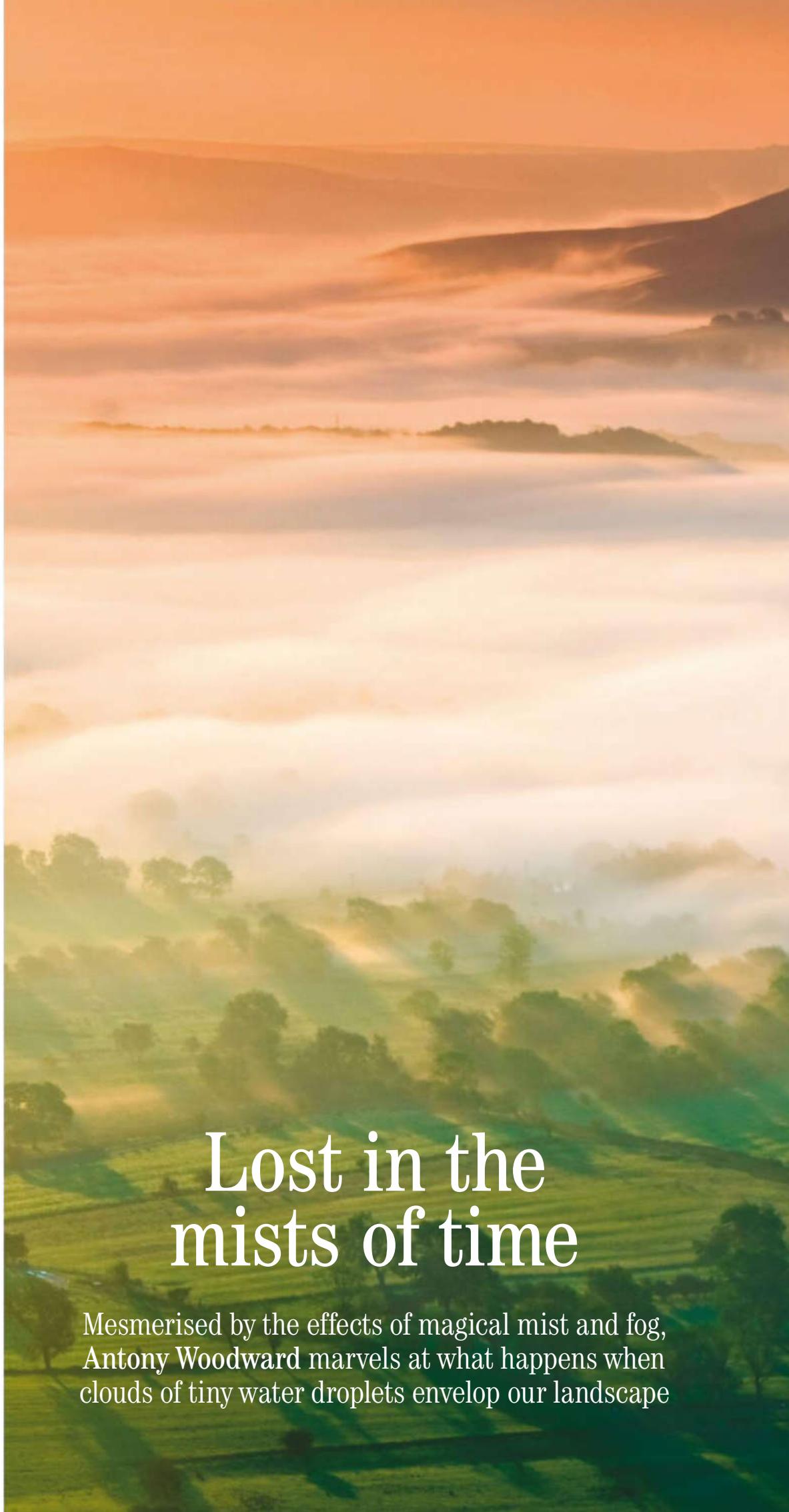
Mist and fog (fog is just dense mist, *see box*) are one of the perks of our damp, temperate, maritime climate. Possible at any time, but most frequent after cold, clear nights during autumn and winter, these airborne water droplets are really low cloud—so low that we’re granted the astonishing, surreal experience of being able to walk through them. By coming down to Earth, they cross the subconscious boundary that separates the ethereal romance of the Heavens from the tawdry, sharp-edged physicality of terrestrial reality—and, in doing so, they crowbar a little wonder into even the most impervious lives.

Longer views acquire a graphic simplicity. Lower parts of the landscape, where mist usually collects, become airbrushed white. Higher ground becomes compressed—telephoto style—into a series of darker ridges silhouetted against paler vales beyond. Vertical elements on these ridges—towers, steeples, trees—are picked out clear as the spikes of an electrocardiograph.

Alan Novelli/Alamy Stock Photo

The feelings that such atmospheric high jinks evoke are trickier to address, as they inevitably vary according to the ➤

Swathed in mist, the Lafarge cement works in Derbyshire assume the air of a fairytale kingdom



Lost in the mists of time

Mesmerised by the effects of magical mist and fog, Antony Woodward marvels at what happens when clouds of tiny water droplets envelop our landscape





mind and mood of each individual. What to some may be eerie, others consider exquisite, but it's safe to assume that most of the usual suspects—the transience and fragility of life, mortality, the melancholy of beauty, the euphoria of hope—are there.

'Why is summer mist romantic and autumn mist just sad?' wonders Dodie Smith in *I Capture the Castle*. To which the obvious riposte is: 'Because autumn mist accompanies a lower sun, starker landscape and dying leaves.' Most importantly, however, what these effects do is force us to look again, to reappraise what we thought we knew.

Plainly, some minds are more susceptible to this stuff than others. For Wordsworth, tramping up Snowdon through 'a dripping fog, low hung and thick' to catch the sunrise, the experience of emerging above the 'silent sea' triggered a quasi-religious experience. 'There I beheld the emblem of a mind/That feeds upon infinity, that broods/Over the dark abyss.'

Fog, needless to say, is divisive. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, its appeal depends largely on whether the beholder is immersed within it, or ensconced smugly on a hill above in dazzling sunshine. As a nation, our favourite literary fog

is probably the one that hangs over Dartmoor's 'Grimpen Mire' on an October night at the turn of the 19th century: 'Holmes... muttered impatiently as he watched its sluggish drift. "It's moving towards us, Watson."

"Is that serious?"

"Very serious, indeed."

And there lies the essential difference between mist and fog. Fog is serious. Where mist is benign, playful, poetic and tantalising, fog is not. Fog masks, suffocates, lies in wait, hiding ferocious

Above: Boats loom through the mist in Teignmouth, Devon. **Below:** Eastern promise: the sun rises over a Chinese-style pagoda at Chastleton Glebe, Oxfordshire

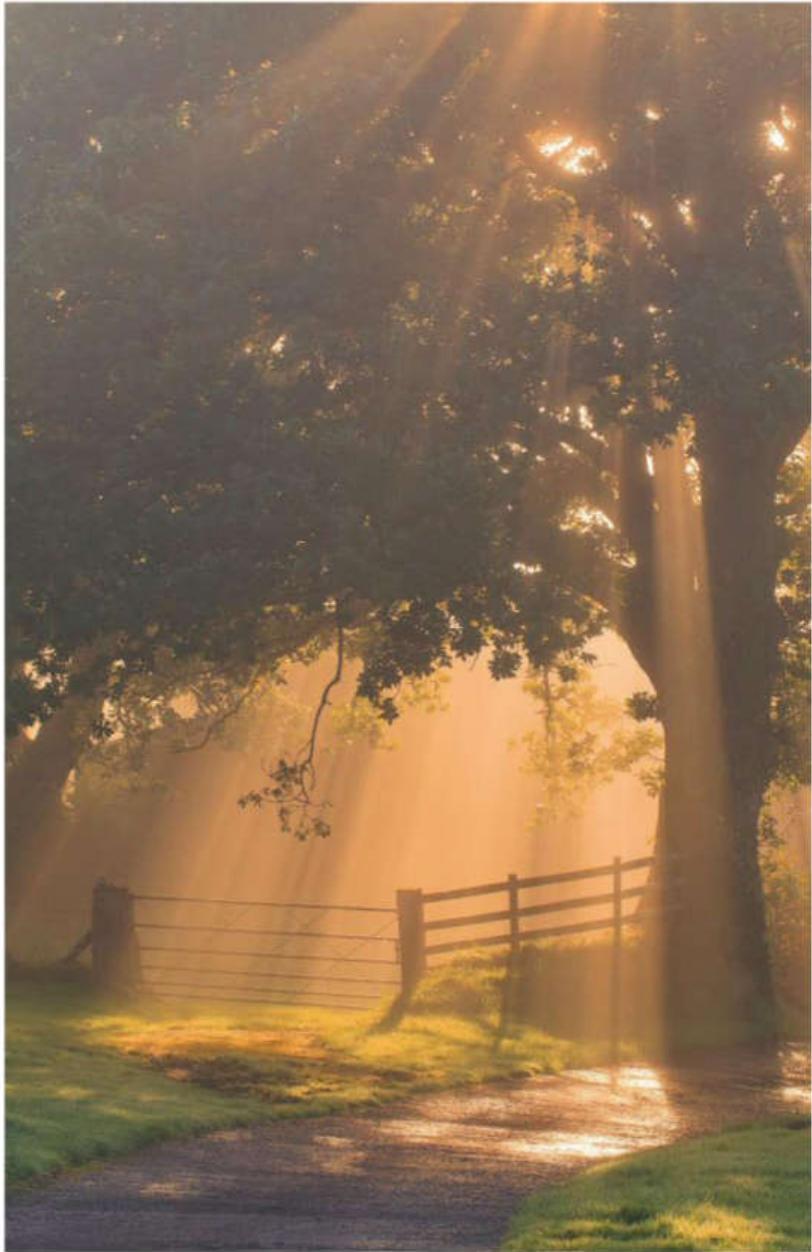
hounds with phosphorescent teeth. Accordingly, although fog has been enthusiastically co-opted by novelists—notably in the urban gothic of Dickens, Stevenson, Wilde and Conan Doyle—it has usually been to exploit a negative reputation attributable to London.

Until the Clean Air Act of 1956 took effect, London's defining quality was its fog. By the late 19th century, visibility in the capital sometimes dwindled to 12in—so thick you couldn't see your feet and theatre performances had to be cancelled because the stage was invisible. Even in the 1960s, tourists could still buy souvenir tins of 'London Fog'.

Not that everyone thought this way. Monet visited London specifically for its fogs and, in February 1901, he was so transfixed by the endlessly changing light over the Thames from his sixth-floor window at the Savoy that he worked on five canvases before breakfast. 'The beautiful effects,' he wrote, 'are scarcely to be believed.' And he was right, of course—as any visitor to Avalon must surely agree.

Antony Woodward lives, for large parts of the year, in, and just occasionally above, dense hill fog—an experience described in his book 'The Garden in the Clouds'





Secrets and romance: a foggy background to this sun-dappled sessile oak in Powys, Wales, makes this the ideal spot for an autumn tryst (above) and mist casts a veil over the Usk Valley at dawn (below)



Have you got the foggiest? How to tell mist from murk

Mist

When water droplets in the air reduce visibility to between 0.5 miles and 6 miles. Density varies according to the amount of moisture in the air

Fog

Mist becomes fog when visibility is less than 0.5 miles. However, what motorists or pedestrians know as fog is probably denser—about 200 yards. Fog is stratus (layer) cloud at ground level

Different types of fog form in different ways:

Radiation fog, generally over land, is regular winter fog, forming under clear skies on calm nights. When the land cools by thermal radiation, the air close to the surface cools, too. Unable to hold so much moisture as water vapour, it condenses into fog. Tends to dissipate rapidly after sunrise as the ground warms

Sea fog, or advection fog, occurs when moist, mild air is cooled by passing over a cooler sea, such as the 'sea mist' that heralds Dracula's arrival at Whitby. Sea fogs can be blown inland (see *haar*)

Valley fog forms in still conditions when colder, denser air drains off hills and moisture in it condenses. Usually the result of a 'temperature inversion', when the normal lapse of temperature with altitude becomes inverted, so that colder air is beneath warmer air

Hill fog forms when moving air is forced upwards as it passes over hills. The air cools as it rises and any moisture in it condenses, creating effects such as Dartmoor's fogs and Table Mountain's 'table cloth'

Haze Reduced visibility due to smoke, dust or other particles in the atmosphere

Smog 'Smoke' plus 'fog' equals 'smog', the term coined by Dr H. A. des Vœux in a paper delivered to the Public Health Congress in 1905. Dirty, smoke-generated fogs once blighted London, Manchester and Edinburgh (known as Auld Reekie or Old Smoky). The disastrous four-day Great London Smog of 1952 led to the Clean Air Act, which came into force in 1956

Haar Scottish term for a sea fog that rolls inland, often during early evening. Common in summer along the east coast (especially the Spey) and north-east England, when haars can reach several miles inland. Variations include har, hare, harl, harr and hoar

Sea fret

The Yorkshire or Northumberland term for a haar

There will be blood

THERE can often be 20 casualties in a modern production of *Titus Andronicus*—14 in the play itself and half a dozen in the audience. Indeed, special effects are now so foolproof that blood and gore is as confidently used in live theatre as in the controlled environment of film and television.

However, having slaughter re-enacted literally in your face can take its toll. The front few rows were splattered in Michael Fentiman's 2013 realistic production of the Bard's tragedy at the Swan Theatre for the RSC—in the final scene, everyone on stage was popping blood capsules. But this had nothing on last year's revival at Shakespeare's Globe, directed so gruesomely by Lucy Bailey, when more than 100 members of the audience fainted or left the theatre. 'The medics room was chock-a-block,' recalls actress Katy Stephens.

Even *The Independent*'s theatre critic, Holly Williams, succumbed. 'It was a testament to the production and the intensity of the performers, as well as the convincing job done by the technical team,' she says. 'They made it so engrossing that it became physically overwhelming. There may also have been the domino effect of watching others clunk to the floor!'

Norfolk-based Dempsey's has been making stage blood since the 1950s for theatre companies such as the RSC and Opera North, plus Madame Tussauds and London's Science and Natural History Museums. In addition to being ethically unacceptable, real blood congeals, discolours and degrades too quickly to be practical.

Alfred Hitchcock used chocolate syrup for his infamous shower scene in *Psycho* (1960)—shot in black and white, the colour hardly mattered. However, the ingredients

Black treacle, cocoa powder and beetroot are just some of the surprising ingredients used to concoct the most realistic and gruesome stage blood, reports Pippa Cuckson

that make up Dale Dempsey's blood recipes may surprise—the original concoction, devised by Mr Dempsey's father, comprised golden syrup, black treacle, red cochineal and beetroot. Recent additions include pomegranate molasses, carob syrup, glycerine, food dye and preservative.

The firm's powdered blood contains organic cocoa powder, arrowroot, blueberry extract and strawberry flavouring and tastes as delicious as it sounds. Party planners The Last Tuesday Society offered it as a dip at Halloween. 'To keep up your energy levels, you can eat it,' discloses Miss Stephens, who is smothered in blood almost throughout as Clytemnestra in the Globe's current production of *The Oresteia*. 'My main worry with blood in open-air theatre is wasps—they love it.'

Sugar-crazed predators aren't the only hazard, however. Stage

blood can stain skin the same Essex orange as fake tan. Miss Stephens applies barrier cream and showers up to four times a day. It's also slippery and blood spills can result in unscheduled action on stage.

For seasoned theatricals, buying in blood is as routine as choosing paint. When the director of the Welsh National Opera's production of *Maria Stuarda* wanted to depict the signing of the death warrant by smearing blood over a Perspex window, a range of different consistencies of blood was put to the test. 'Our supplier provided us with tester pots in various thickened states to find the one that looked the best,' divulges deputy stage manager Katie Heath-Jones.

The same attention to detail is required for TV—due to its subtle lighting, the BBC's recent production of *Wolf Hall* commissioned Cardiff-based

No animals were harmed in the making of this scene: Joseph Millson gets his hands dirty as Macbeth at Shakespeare's Globe in 2013

Bloodymarvellous to produce blood in a darker crimson than usual. And those who opt for Dempsey's products can manipulate them to suit themselves by using arterial spray (dilution) or congealment (brown thickener).

Although bespoke bloods should be thoroughly tested before the big night, according to Sandra Smith, RSC head of wigs and make-up, things can still go wrong. 'We will fill a colostomy bag to provide a continuous stream, but it can make a farting noise when you put pressure on it,' she reveals. 'I've covered an actress in blood a scene before I should. It was a quick change and very noisy backstage—I thought she was shouting "more, more", when actually she was shouting "no, no", but I kept piling it on. Her next scene was a funeral and the cast was certainly crying, for different reasons, as the poor actress walked on.'

Does the visceral experience really enhance the performance? Miss Stephens thinks so. 'In a Greek tragedy, the stories are brutal and gory and relentless—if you have two torsos and eight limbs, no one could walk on bloodless after committing such a frenzied attack,' she contends. 'Also, the Globe is such a vast space, everything needs to be accentuated just that bit more.'

Miss Williams is in full agreement. 'It's one entirely valid way to approach *Titus*.' However, the journalist wasn't so impressed by two other recent plays with blood—*Let The Right One In* (National Theatre of Scotland, based on a Swedish vampire story) and *A View From the Bridge* (Wyndham's). 'These felt more stagey, using it for theatrical effect rather than verisimilitude,' she notes. 'I am now, however, completely paranoid about fainting in the stalls again.'

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by Melanie Johnson

More ways with apples

Toffee-apple pieces with toffee popcorn (below)

Cut as many cubes from four apples as you can. Squeeze a little lemon juice over them so they don't go brown and set them aside. Over a medium heat, add 200g caster sugar, half a tspn white-wine vinegar and 200ml water to a large, heavy-based pan. Heat until the sugar has dissolved and then don't stir for about 10 minutes or until the temperature reaches 150°C on a sugar thermometer. Remove from the heat and pour in all the apple pieces. Remove them quickly with two spoons and place them on baking paper to set. While they're soft, add toffee-popcorn pieces. Serve once fully hardened.



Whole baked apples with pastry

Remove the cores from 4 apples. Take 2 sheets of pre-rolled short-crust pastry and cut circles large enough to fully enclose the apples. Scatter with caster sugar. Mix together 2tbspn of mixed seeds, 2tbspn of mixed nuts, 1tbspn of maple syrup, 1tbspn of ground almonds, 1tspn of cinnamon and 30g unsalted butter. Place an apple at the centre of each pastry circle. Fill with the nut mixture. Envelope the apple in pastry and invert onto a baking sheet. Brush with beaten egg and bake in a hot oven for about 30 minutes. You could make decorative pastry leaves for the top. Serve with caramel ice cream.

My bircher muesli

Take 50g oats and soak them overnight in 100ml apple juice and 100ml almond milk. The following morning, add 2 grated apples, a handful each of roughly chopped hazelnuts and almonds, a few chopped dried apricots and, once served into bowls, a dollop of Greek yoghurt. Sprinkle flaxseeds over it and eat. If you need a little sweetness, add maple syrup.

Melanie Johnson

This week's recipe gives a nod to colonial cooking. You could replace the guinea fowl with pheasant or chicken if you prefer a less gamey taste, but, either way, it will taste delicious



Tandoori guinea fowl with coconut-fried-apple slices

Serves 4 as a starter

Ingredients

1 whole guinea fowl
Juice of 1 lemon
1 red onion, quartered
4 cloves garlic, peeled
5 red chillies, deseeded
2cm piece of ginger
1tspn paprika
2tspn turmeric
2tspn *garam masala*
200g Greek yoghurt
Seasoning
Fresh herbs to garnish
3 apples
3tbspn coconut oil

Method

First, cut the guinea fowl into eight skinless pieces. Then, in the bowl of a food processor, pulse the lemon juice, quartered red onion, garlic, chillies, ginger, paprika, turmeric and *garam masala* into a coarse paste. Season and stir the Greek yoghurt through it, then put the marinade into a bowl.

Add the guinea fowl pieces to the bowl and stir to completely cover them with the marinade. Put clingfilm over the bowl and place it in the fridge for at least four hours. When you're ready to cook the guinea fowl, you'll need to remove it from your fridge about 20 minutes beforehand to bring it to room temperature.

Preheat your oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6. Roast the guinea-fowl pieces on a foil-lined baking sheet for half an hour, before placing foil over the top to prevent burning. Cook for a further 30 minutes. Remove the foil for a final browning if the pieces look too pale.

Get 12 good slices from each apple by slicing them across the middle. Fry these in the coconut oil for a few minutes each side.

Arrange a few pieces of apple on each plate and add a couple of cooked guinea-fowl pieces. Dot with fresh herbs and serve.



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Interior design Made in Britain

Photograph by Richard Cannon



Wood-burning stove manufacturer: Chesney's

PAUL CHESNEY never intended to build a career in wood-burning stoves and fireplaces. After reading law at Cambridge, he qualified as a solicitor, but quickly realised the career wasn't for him. 'In the mid 1980s, I was doing up a flat in London and I came across a fireplace in a skip. About a month later, I found a similar, refurbished one in a shop in Camden—it had a price tag of £400.'

Realising there was money to be made and, after two decades of people tearing out period fittings that were filling up reclamation yards, Paul borrowed a small amount of money and set about stocking a warehouse in Essex with salvaged finds. 'The timing was perfect for this type of product: the country-house look was becoming fashionable again and there was a big movement in reclamation.'

Nearly 30 years on, the company has shops in London, New York, Shanghai and Beijing. 'It hasn't all been plain sailing,' explains Paul.

'An attempt to sell Victorian fireplaces to the Americans flopped—they burn huge logs that aren't suitable for our small domestic grates.'

Today, Chesney's antiques business represents less than 2% of the annual turnover; reproduction marble and stone fireplaces, heating appliances and wood-burning stoves are the main drivers, with the latter making up 40% of sales. 'The stoves are entirely made in the Midlands. You can make them much cheaper in China, but, over the past five years, for both altruistic and financial reasons, we've made a conscious effort to, to use the jargon, "near source".'

He continues: 'I think the crash of 2008 concentrated everyone's minds on what was really important. Buying a UK-manufactured product, safe in the knowledge that it has been built using the best raw materials and craftsmanship, really counts.' *Arabella Youens* (020-7627 1410; <http://chesneys.co.uk>)

Interior design The designer's room

Annabel Astor is one of the most influential forces in British interior design. Her career in design began when she founded her eponymous jewellery business, Annabel Jones, and, in 1999, co-founded, along with Sue Jones and Lucinda Waterhouse, the interiors company OKA





How to get the look

Furniture

The chairs are the new Stafford design from OKA (0844 815 7380; www.okadirect.com)

Fabrics

Colefax and Fowler sells a variety of classic English florals. See the full range at Design Centre Chelsea Harbour, London SW10 (020-7351 0666; www.colefax.com)

China

Thomas Goode, 19, South Audley Street, London W1 (020-7499 2823, www.thomasgoode.com) has exquisite decorative china that is perfect for creating collections

Decorative porcelain

For similar Derby botanical plates, try Albert Amor Ltd, the expert in 18th-century English porcelain. 37, Bury Street, London SW1 (020-7930 2444; www.albertamor.co.uk)

Lamps

For table lamps and similar silk shades, try Besselink & Jones at 99, Walton Street, London SW3 (020-7584 0343; www.besselink.com) ➤

Behind the design Annabel Astor

The project

This is the dining room within the Queen Anne core of the Oxfordshire manor house that Annabel Astor shares with her husband, William

THE room was last decorated more than 40 years ago and Annabel decided to leave both the walls and the curtains of the original scheme untouched. Nevertheless, she has transformed the room in other ways, both in its appearance and the number of people that it can accommodate. Like many rooms in houses built during the period—even grand houses such as this—the space is small. Annabel was keen to sit 18 guests and has used narrow chairs from her own collection that make the most of the available space.

Previously, it was furnished with a dark-mahogany dining table and black chairs, so, to create a lighter feel, Annabel has introduced elements such as adding a white tablecloth, a *suzani* throw and a collection of Derby botanical plates that all reflect light. Silk-covered lampshades complement the richness of the green walls. *Oscar Norton*



Designer profile

Training and experience

Annabel set up her eponymous Annabel Jones jewellery company when she was 18. Her distinctive designs, including her rope ring and bumblebee necklace, attracted a huge following, including Diana, Princess of Wales. She is a co-founder of OKA



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Treehouse bed, available in 22 colours or in bare pine, by Oliver Hayden. From £1,300 (0844 335 0710; www.oliverhayden.com)



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Desk by Vertbaudet, £125 (0844 842 0000; www.vertbaudet.co.uk)

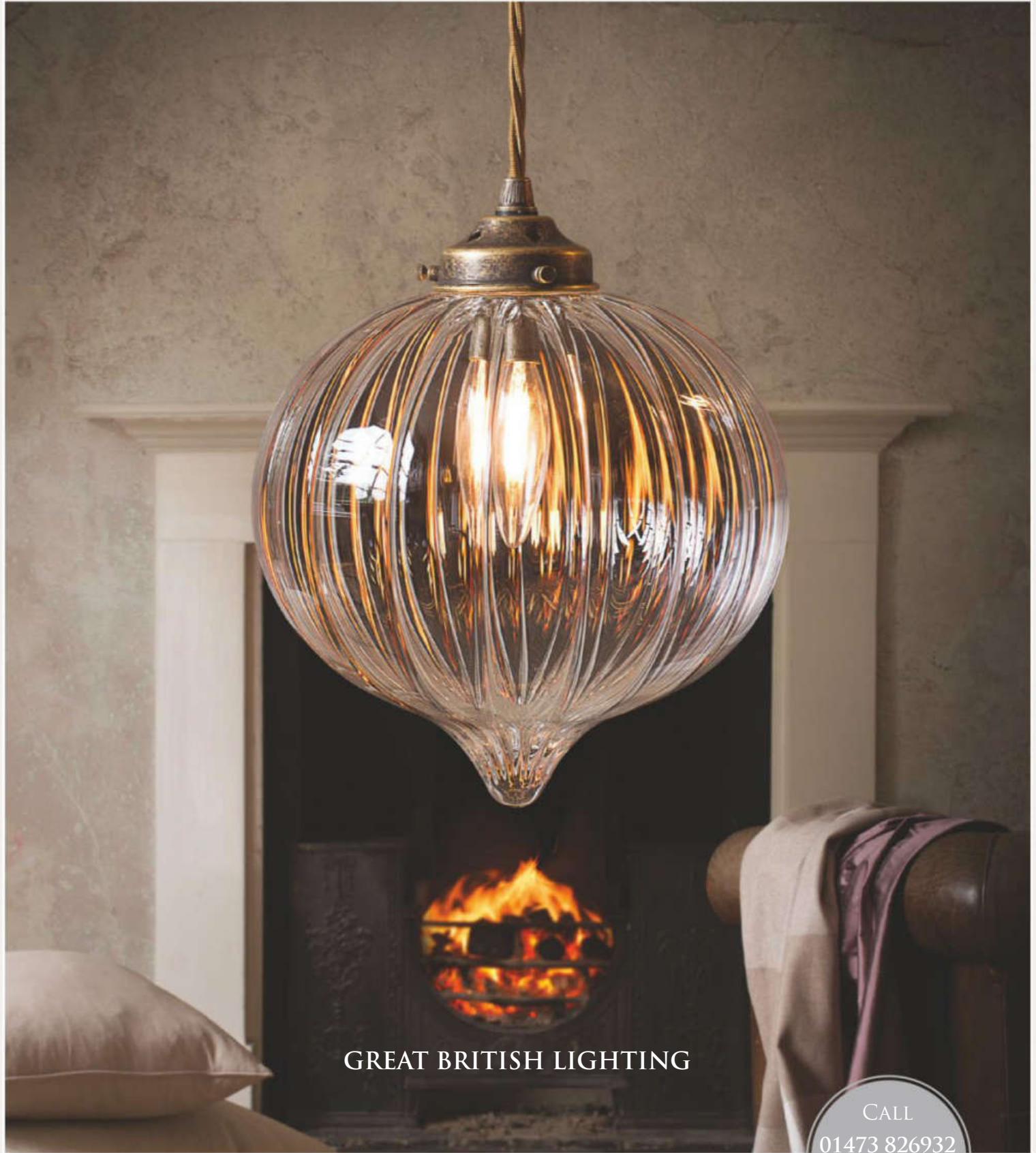


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Interior design Inside stories

1 Tropical tastes

Matthew Williamson is among the growing band of clothes designers—including Diane von Furstenberg, Giorgio Armani and Barbara Hulanicki—who have turned their hands to creating collections of fabric and wallpapers. His new Cubana collection for Osborne & Little is out now and includes all sorts of exotic flora and fauna that will transform any scheme. To see the collection, visit Osborne & Little's showroom at 304, King's Road, London SW3 (020-8812 3123; www.osborneandlittle.com)



2



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4



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2 Gallic charm

Christian Liaigre, one of the most influential forces in French design, has opened a new London outpost selling his distinctive furniture and accessories. It's at 52, Conduit Street, London W1 (020-7584 5848, www.christian-liaigre.fr)

3 Dark and handsome

Wiltshire-based upholstery specialist Stuart Scott creates simple designs with an angular, masculine edge that marries brilliantly with more classic styles of furniture. This autumn, he launches a whole raft of new designs that include this Alae lounge chair, which will make a handsome addition to any scheme and which costs £2,600, including fabric and decorative nailing (optional). For more details, visit www.stuartscott.co.uk or telephone 01225 753592

Don't miss...

The Cotswold-based fabric and wallpaper house Lewis & Wood is having its annual warehouse sale on October 9 (from 10am to 6pm) and October 10 (from 10am to 4pm) in Woodchester Mill, near Stroud, Gloucestershire (01453 878517; www.lewisandwood.co.uk)

'The Fabric of India' at the V&A, which includes a tent, costumes and contemporary fashion (reviewed in our September 30 number). It runs until January 10, 2016 (020-7942 2000; www.vam.ac.uk)

Regent's Park is the setting for contemporary art fair Frieze London from October 14 to 17, displaying the work of some of the world's most exciting contemporary artists (020-3372 6111; www.friezelondon.com)

Christie's South Kensington is hosting MULTIPLIED, the only UK fair dedicated to contemporary art in editions, from October 16-18 (www.multipliedartfair.com)

4



5

4 On the right lines

Fans of Roger Oates, the designer who has succeeded in breathing new life (and lots of fun) into British staircases with his inventive approach to runners, will be delighted to hear that he now offers a bespoke service that allows you to choose any colour—or combination of colours—that takes your fancy. Prices start at £154 per metre, from his showroom at 1, Munro Terrace, off Riley Street, London SW10 (020-7351 2288; www.rogeroates.com)

5 Pewter perfect

Pewter specialist Royal Selangor has opened a showroom on the King's Road selling its range of beautiful and distinctive items, from cutlery and glassware to accessories. It's at 261, King's Road, London SW3 (020-7474 5511; www.royalselangor.com)



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ENGLAND

Crossing borders

Through her company, Volga Linen, Theresa Tollemache has shown how Russian linens can be used with style. Mary Miers visits her at home
Photographs by Justin Paget

FOR all the Englishness of the East Anglian vernacular, there's something about Decoy Farm, near Aldeburgh in Suffolk, with its clutch of wooden outbuildings shaded by pines and silver birches, that suggests a painting by Levitan or Shishkin. Hidden down a long track, the flat, sandy settlement might be a wilderness homestead on the edge of a Russian forest. 'When I found this place—tumbledown, overgrown, birchy—it resonated. It made me feel as if I'd stumbled upon a little corner of my grandmother's homeland,' says the founder of Volga Linen.

Theresa Tollemache has assimilated into this bosky idyll many subtle references to the country that inspires her business, from the guest annexe *dacha* and *izba*-like huts, to books, pictures and objects accumulated within. And then, of course, there's her Volga Linen, a fabric she's tailored to suit British taste, with its love of artisan simplicity mixed with a hint of luxury. Decoy Farm is a showcase for these exquisite pure linens, demonstrating how they can be used with style and versatility for richly textured upholstery and tablecloths as well as fine bed and bath linens.

The house is also the embodiment of her very individual personality, in which English family life and the sensibilities of a fine colourist, cook and gardener converge with her worlds of business and travel and, overall, her abiding love of Russia.

She came here in the late 1990s after her three children had left home. 'I'd spent childhood holidays



Above: Theresa Tollemache in her London showroom.
Below: The spare room, with its boarded ceiling and neutral linens, has a New England feel.
Facing page: The sitting room, with Volga Linen upholstery and cushions

to buy. Reeling from the blow, Theresa embraced the opportunity to rebuild, with the help of her friends and neighbours the architects Michael and Patty Hopkins. They came up with a simple design that's easy to live in and deceptively large.

The house adopts the local vernacular with a contemporary inflection: the main range, modelled on a Suffolk longhouse, has sand-coloured render, clay pantiles and boarded timber ceilings coupled with exposed steel roof trusses and spiral stairs and huge floor-to-ceiling windows. It's dominated by a double-height living room, which leads, at the far end, into the master bedroom suite and, at the near end, across a small entrance hall into the lower kitchen range.

Theresa lives here with concert pianist Christian Blackshaw, whose studio occupies one of the woodland huts. Her daughter and son-in-law have converted the model dairy and a son lives nearby, so there are regular comings and goings of children and grandchildren and frequent gatherings of friends and family round the large kitchen table as Theresa throws together another of her legendary meals with apparent effortless ease.

'I love cooking and the kitchen is an important part of my life,' she says, 'but I'm allergic to designer kitchens and didn't want mine to look like an operating theatre, so I planned it with everything I needed in a small ➤







space at one end, centred about my Aga, so that I can prepare food while talking to my friends.'

A large, French *armoire* at the other end demonstrates Theresa's tip that you need just one good piece of furniture to make a room and the rest can then be done relatively cheaply—in this case, with kitchen fittings from Ikea ('I just painted them') and loose-checked linen chair covers ('they transform cheap chairs'). Crushed-linen tablecloths and napkins add colour and texture.

Watching Theresa wandering through her house, moving things around, shaking out a rumpled linen tablecloth here, filling a big vase with armfuls of flowers there, one realises that the secret to her relaxed style is confidence. In many ways, it exemplifies English decoration: informal and eclectic, casually elegant, deploying colour and texture with an instinctive eye.

It's best demonstrated in the sitting room, where vibrant *kilims* from Turkey, Moldova and the Caucasus and cushions and chair covers from across the Volga Linen colour spectrum are mixed with antique textiles, table lamps from India and Morocco and paintings from Russia or by friends.

The 'meaningful' piece in this room is the big, rustic mirror above the fireplace, which was made from a *dacha* window painted Air Force blue. 'I find more and more as I get older that colour is vital. Muted colours are not for me—too dull. As a result, I end up with rather a lot of reds; saffron I think is also a terrific colour.'

She admits to sometimes making mistakes, but doesn't think it matters. 'I'm not a decorator; I'm not really interested in it. My rooms evolve organically with things collected on my travels. Everything means something to me.'

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a traditional
Russian
technique**

Despite the eclecticism, there's also a touch of New England about Theresa's interiors, particularly in the bedrooms, where neutral colours and painted wooden ceilings combine with the finest white curtains and bed and bath linens to give a very light, airy feel. She's also used Volga Linen for lampshades and even as panels for cupboard doors to transform cheaply made wardrobes into pretty bedroom pieces.

It was with a small collection of bed and table linens that Theresa started Volga Linen in 1995. Six years earlier, she'd gone to Russia to trace her family roots after the death of her grandmother. Communism had collapsed and *Perestroika* was proving traumatic; it was a rough period in which trading and business were lean.

'I got involved with the BEARR Trust, which we set up to bring medicine to hospitals. We found that many Russians were proud and disliked being on the receiving end of a charity; ➤

Plain English

CUPBOARDMAKERS



they wanted to build up a relationship with the West in a more productive way—to have trade, not aid. Meanwhile, I'd noticed that, even though shops lacked basic staple foods, the *babushkas* were still buying table linen—it was about the only thing for sale and I'd bring samples back home as presents.

'That's how it started: I'd discovered an industry steeped in ancient traditions of weaving and embroidery that was little known outside Russia. I was in my fifties and had no business experience, but my friend Aliona Doletskaya, who became the first editor of Russian *Vogue*, encouraged me and, together, we'd go off on trips exploring parts of the Upper Volga that had been out of bounds to foreigners during the Soviet regime.

'This was the heartland of European Russia and we discovered extraordinary places—old estates and abandoned country houses—and visited the great old cities on the Volga with their famous textile mills. Everything in Russia was made of linen then, there was no cotton or manmade fibre to be seen. The mills made all the country's agricultural sacking as well as the finest damasks for the Kremlin.

'We scoured factories and workshops for people I could work with and I began sourcing all my linens from there. Importing from Russia was complex and bureaucratic and I didn't have much to invest, but I borrowed small sums from friends and had a sort of naïve optimism that drove me and made it all work.'

Theresa's commitment to Volga Linen, as well as to supporting the embroidery skills that have been handed down through generations of Russian women, is evident in the way she's adapted her business to meet dramatically changed circumstances. 'Tragically, all the weaving factories have closed down and no flax is grown in the region anymore; Russia has killed off its linen industry and now imports cheap foreign textiles, so I have to go to the Baltics and Belarus for my linen and to Scotland for heavier weaves.'

'But I've managed to find one Russian sewing factory that's still operating. It specialises in the hand-drawn thread work that gives my linen its unique Russian character [elegant monograms combined with cross-, hem- or ladder-stitched borders]; I think I'm their only exporter.'

Theresa pares back and simplifies the more elaborate Russian designs—'reluctantly, as they like to show off their skills'—to make them more appeal-



Above: The kitchen tablecloth's woven Paisley design is one that Theresa found in the archive of a Russian weaving factory. The teapot and cups are Lomonosov Imperial Porcelain from St Petersburg

ing to a Western market. She's also created a more subtle range of colours for Volga Linen: 'I'm inspired by what I see in Russia, but I have my own strong vision of what I like and what will appeal to British taste. It's a tight palette, but I think it's important not to have too much choice and I haven't got a single dud colour'—although, she adds: 'If I wanted to, I could exist solely on selling Natural and Ivory White.'

The launch last month of her new print collection represents an exciting new venture for the company. 'Some time ago, an art dealer friend in Moscow gave me an archive of 19th-century linocuts and suggested I might be able to do something with them. I sat on them for a decade, partly because I didn't do prints, but then, recently, I looked at them again and realised they were very original.'

She's now had five of the designs screen-printed (originally, they would

The lower kitchen range of Decoy Farm leads out into a courtyard garden with a fountain

have been hand-blocked) in two colourways: the original colour and one new one. It's the first time she's done printed linens, but they make a vibrant addition to the Volga Linen portfolio and strengthen its Russian identity.

With her Gorchakov and Korostolev blood beating strongly, Theresa takes a deep interest in the Russian side of her business and you can't spend long in her presence without being aware of her deep passion for her motherland, which she visits regularly. As Lesley Blanch wrote, once Russia takes hold of you with its giant hands, the grip never lessens.

Volga Linen sells linen items for the home, fabric by the metre and a limited range of clothing. The showroom, open by appointment, is at The Gasworks, 2, Michael Road (off the New Kings Road), London SW6 (01728 635020; www.volgalinen.co.uk)

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Let's do the time warp again

The right combination of fittings, paint and accessories make it easy to give your bathroom a period feel, says Carla Passino



CREATING a bathroom that matches your country house's period can be a daunting prospect—no other room has evolved so much in the past 300 years. Having made a timid appearance in the Georgian era as a corner of the bedroom, the bathroom changed beyond recognition in the 19th and 20th centuries and returning to basin-and-pitcher sets and commodes would be a tall order.

The good news, however, is that, with the right choice of bath, basins, brassware, paints and accessories, you can reproduce the feel of an antique bathroom without sacrificing any of the comforts we take for granted today.

Georgian style

'The best way to create a Georgian-style bathroom is to use a piece of antique furniture,

such as a chest of drawers or a sideboard, and replace the top with marble to create a vanity unit,' says interior designer Joanna Wood, who also recommends adding antique-style mirrors to set the right tone.

Walls can be covered in wallpaper—Joanna has, on occasion, chosen a Georgian-print Toile de Jouy—or painted in shades that are true to period. Later-Georgian schemes used dusky pinks, soft greys, greens and blues and these colours, all in a matte finish, 'are perfect for the bathroom, because they promote relaxation,' explains Josephine Rance, marketing director at Farrow & Ball.

Lighting is the final touch and Joanna likes to combine low-voltage downlights with antique wall brackets: 'Vaughan Designs does very pretty period-style light fittings, which conform to regulations, and Phillips and Wood will refit period lights if needed.' ➤

Pea green was a popular shade in the 18th century and this paint by interior designer Edward Bulmer is ideal for Georgian-style bathrooms. From £40 for 2.5 litres through Pots of Paint (01544 388535; <http://potsofpaint.com>)

Try The single Derwent light by Drummonds. From £390 ([www.drummonds-uk.com](http://drummonds-uk.com); 020-7376 4499)



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Victorian style

The bathroom as a dedicated space gained currency in the Victorian era and taking pride of place was a freestanding, cast-iron bathtub, which remains the centrepiece of today's Victorian-style bathrooms. 'To re-create the 19th-century look, start with three key elements: an enamelled cast-iron bath, an equally imposing loo—preferably with a high-level cistern—and white-china basins set within a marble washstand,' says Drummond Shaw, director at period-bathroom specialist Drummonds. If space allows, you could also install a freestanding shower, such as Drummonds's The Spittal.

For an authentic-looking scheme, adds Rob Whitaker, creative director at Fired Earth, consider choosing ornate mirrors and patterned encaustic floor tiles.

Brass is the material of choice for taps, which should be large, solid and gleaming. In a truly Victorian bathroom, adds Drummond, 'these would be just one element of a more highly decorative scheme featuring richly coloured wall and floor tiles, often with geometric designs. If you don't want to commit to feature tiling, use colour on the walls and bath sides to get a similar feel.'

Farrow & Ball suggests a deep red such as the company's Eating Room Red or a chic aubergine such as Brinjal to create period glamour in a smaller bathroom. For larger spaces, opt for wallpaper in damask or large floral, bird or animal motifs.

Even the grandest Victorian bathroom would have been short on effective lighting, but, says Drummond, adjustable light sources will allow you to switch from a mellow Victorian atmosphere to a brightly lit space. ➤

The Clyde, a cast-iron, roll-top bathtub, is the quintessential fitting for a Victorian-style bathroom. From £3,570 (020-7376 4499; www.drummonds-uk.com)



Try Swadling Invincible Thermostatic Valve from Matki. From £694.80 (01454 322888; www.matki.co.uk)

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Edwardian style

The late-Victorian era saw the rise of the simpler aesthetic promoted by the Arts-and-Crafts movement, which then came into its own in the Edwardian period. Its hallmarks, says Rob, are timeless natural materials and superb craftsmanship. 'Look for handmade wooden washstands, tactile stone bowls and hand-decorated tiles featuring floral motifs. Simplicity and attention to detail are key to Arts-and-Crafts style: eye-catching finishes such as polished nickel or a copper bowl with a mellow patina finish are ideal for this look.'

The Edwardian approach to interiors also called for fresh colours, such as pastel blues and cooling greens. 'Interiors were less formal and the style was seen as a breath

Floral motifs are a distinctive feature of the Arts-and-Crafts style and these hand-decorated tiles from Fired Earth's Botanical Garden collection are evocative of the Edwardian era. Prices start at £19.96 for one tile. Contact Fired Earth (0845 366 0400; www.firedearth.com) for stockists

of fresh air,' says Josephine. 'There was a return to a more pared-down approach to colour. Keeping the walls light and airy gives a refreshing look, which is perfect for relaxing when soaking in the bath.'

Decorative tiles would be a suitable wall covering for a bathroom of this period. Fired Earth has a range inspired by Leslie Green, who was commissioned to design more than 50 Tube stations between 1903 and 1908. ➤



Try Classic exposed black-lever Godolphin thermostatic mixing valve in nickel. £891 (excluding VAT) through Lefroy Brooks (01992 708316; www.lefroybrooks.co.uk)



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Art Deco

The 1920s and early 1930s were the heyday of the bathroom, when it became the space of choice for Society hostesses to display their taste and opulence (see *COUNTRY LIFE*, March 23, 2011). Often vaulted and invariably decorated with a profusion of mirrors, marble and even gold mosaic, it was a masterpiece of subtle ostentation.

Today, says Rob, 'a monochrome palette, combined with strong geometric shapes and chrome and glass accents, is instantly evocative of the Art Deco era. A glamorous glass-legged washstand and dramatic metro-style tiling are perfectly in keeping with the look and a large freestanding bath, such as Fired Earth's Atlantic panelled model, is brimming with Jazz Age style.'

Louise Ashdown, designer at West One Bathrooms, chose a similar approach when she set out to create an Art Deco-inspired bathroom at a country house near Tunbridge Wells in Kent. She picked the boldly geometric Lutetia basin unit by Oasis as the focal point for the room and surrounded it with large polished-porcelain tiles in soft-grey tones to capture the spirit of the Roaring Twenties.

Like tiles, geometrical wallpaper also provides a good alternative to the marble and murals that were common at the time. Josephine suggests Lotus and Block Print Stripe from the Farrow & Ball range, particularly in rooms where there is little natural light.

Glass is a key element of the look—opt for a feature shower door (see Matki for ideas, *details as before*) or the Empire Wall Light by C. P. Hart (020-3617 0820; www.cphart.co.uk).

With its strong geometric design, the Oasis Lutetia cabinet instantly creates an Art Deco look, especially when combined with monochrome wallpaper and a clean-lined mirror. Prices start from £5,900 for a one-drawer, 93cm (3ft) unit with Carrara marble top and Lutetia basin in chrome finish from West One Bathrooms (0333 011 3333; <http://westonebathrooms.com>)



Try Style Moderne basin mixer by Samuel Heath. £766.60 (excluding VAT) (0121-766 4200; www.samuel-heath.co.uk)



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My kitchen:
Michel Roux Jr

Chez moi

Almost 40 years of cooking and numerous appearances on cookery shows has done little to diminish Michel Roux Jr's passion for food. Combining a modern twist on classic French cuisine with the legacy of his father at Le Gavroche, as well as running Roux at Parliament Square and Roux at The Landau, Michel will soon be returning to our screens on Channel 4 with *The Diner*. With all the practicality of a professional setting, the compact kitchen in his London apartment remains a comfortable and welcoming space.

Rachel Ogden
is invited in

Photographs by
Richard Cannon





How to get the look

Cabinetry

The furniture is inspired by the architecture of the eastern seaboard, with glazed doors and a double-moulded cornice with an entablature strip. New England kitchen with polished Verde Eucalyptus worktops and a maple chopping block by Mark Wilkinson Furniture, from £35,000 (01380 850007; www.mwf.com)

Paint

Michel and his wife, Giselle, love bright, rich colours and were keen to avoid dull greys and taupe. Accordingly, the cabinetry is in Richmond MW35, a matte blue-grey shade from Mark Wilkinson Furniture

Appliances

Rather than choosing a professional-style range cooker, Michel opted for the reliable and durable combination of ovens and a hob. Built-in H6860BP pyrolytic oven, £3,099, and DGC6805 steam oven, £3,799, ESW6229 Gourmet warming drawer, £1,049, and KM6366-1 induction hob, £2,075

A large fridge was also a must-have—KF1901Vi, £7,400—as was a built-in CVA6431 coffee machine, £2,099, and dishwasher (for similar, try G6470SCVi, £1,350). All by Miele (0330 160 6600; www.miele.co.uk)

Michel describes his KitchenAid Artisan toaster in Empire Red as a thing of beauty, adding that kitchen kit should look good as well as work efficiently. £269.95, John Lewis (0345 604 9049; www.johnlewis.com)

Used for cooking everything from salt beef to knuckles of pork, an electric pressure cooker is another of Michel's essentials. Instant Pot, £129 (www.instantpot.co.uk)

Knives

Used in his restaurants as well as at home, Michel's range of Global knives is testament to his long-working relationship with the Grunwerg family. A seven-piece block set costs from £749.99 (www.globalknives.uk.com; 0114-275 6700)

Cookware

Also used at Le Gavroche, Michel has his own range of GreenPans at home. Michel Roux by GreenPan starts from £28 for a Ceramic Non-Stick Frypan (01483 736913; www.greenpan.co.uk) ➤

My kitchen: Michel Roux Jr Behind the design

The project

This is the kitchen of Michel's pre-1930s home on a quiet south London street that he shares with his wife, Giselle, with visits from their daughter Emily. He's lived in this apartment for some 25 years and it's accessed via a staircase from ground level. Decorated in vivid colours with paintings by Australian artist David Bromley, the apartment has three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a living room and dining room and the kitchen leads off a central hallway.

Two years ago, the kitchen was renovated to improve on a layout that didn't make the most of the available space. Faced with design obstacles, such as a chimneybreast that couldn't be removed without reinforcing the walls, a bespoke kitchen was the best option. The couple chose Mark Wilkinson Furniture and settled on the New England range finished in a modern blue-grey shade that echoes the strong colours elsewhere in the apartment.

Although floor space is limited, the room's high ceiling allowed for the cabinetry to form tall cupboards where Michel could store books and infrequently used crockery. An island was key when transforming the layout, serving as additional storage space, the main food-prep area and an informal dining area.

As the couple's home in the Ardèche region of France has a kitchen with granite worktops, Michel was keen to have them in the new design, too, choosing a stone flecked with scarlet that reminds him of red-wine droplets. Appliances have been kept to a minimum, with an induction hob like those used in Le Gavroche and an efficient ducted extractor to whisk away lingering cooking odours.

The appliances are complemented by a steam oven that is used for cooking fish and vegetables, a main oven that's quick to heat up and a warming drawer, which doubles as a slow cooker for dishes such as Jacob's Ladder of beef. On the other side of the room, a large fridge is always well stocked, as having plenty of fresh food on hand is a priority for Michel.

Fitting snugly beside the chimneybreast, a built-in coffee machine was an essential for Michel as he drinks



a lot of coffee and above this sits a television. As well as catching up on the news and relaxing with *Saturday Kitchen* on in the background, the couple also like to watch cookery programmes, such as *Le Meilleur Pâtissier*, France's version of *The Great British Bake Off*, so the television also has French channels. Adjacent shallow-depth cupboards house preserves and other dry goods and make the kitchen feel larger than its dimensions.

Sitting below a sash window, the main sink area is home to a deep fireclay sink in the French farmhouse style and is accompanied by a handy filter tap with a separate pullout rinse and a Quooker boiling-water tap. This is another of Michel's indispensable items, used for everything from hot drinks to cooking pasta or vegetables.

Practical flooring was a must, so although Michel considered timber, in the end, the couple chose a wood

Look sharp:
Michel uses
his own range
of Global
knives both
at home and in
his restaurants

lookalike by Karndean, which is a durable vinyl covering. One wall has been kept free of cabinetry to help to maintain an airy, open feel and it's here that Tarantino fan Michel displays a colourful *Kill Bill* film poster next to a sleek black Cordivari radiator. Above the kitchen door is a print of the 2015 winning entry of the Pink Lady Food Photographer of the Year competition, *Smoked Wings* by David Griffen, of which Michel was a judge.

I always have to hand...

Olive oil I like Planeta, which is Italian, quite strong and viscous, with a depth of flavour

Good-quality sea salt It could be Maldon, which is up there with the best in the world, or a sel de Guérande, which is French. They each have their own characteristics

Butter It's very important—I couldn't live without it

Champagne There is always a bottle in the fridge, but I don't favour any particular brand

Preserves Either something we've made ourselves, such as jam or the orange marmalade that Giselle makes, or preserves that we buy in France. For example, there is a snail farm near where we live and we always stock up with their escargots—they're truly delicious. Preserved tripe, too—people either love or hate it. When we come back to the UK, the car is full of jars and tins containing chestnuts, sardines and mackerel. I also love peaches in syrup and preserved tomato pulp



Clockwise from left: A built-in coffee machine was a must—this one by Miele takes Nespresso capsules; the versatile NutriBullet blender; and the KitchenAid toaster that Michel calls 'a thing of beauty'



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It's time to close the shutters and warm up the hearth. Rosie Paterson and Arabella Youens suggest how to create an inviting country-house look this autumn



↳ **Fleece-lined dog bed** by Emily Bond, £86 (01173 763067; www.emilybond.co.uk)



↳ **Ocean light** by Soane Britain, £1,800 (020-7730 6400; www.soane.co.uk)

↳ **Leaning chair**, available buttoned or unbuttoned, from Rose Uniacke. From £3,800, excluding VAT and fabric (www.roseuniacke.com; 020-7730 7050)



↑ **Large Petherton basket** from Neptune, £145 (01793 427450; www.neptune.com)



↑ **Cashmere Shenandoah rug** from Luke Irwin, £11,250 (020-7730 6070; www.lukeirwin.com)



↳ **Six-piece copper cookware set** by Mauviel for Harrods, £1,499 (020-7730 1234; www.harrods.com) >



↑ The new **Arada Farringdon** would work well in a large sitting room or barn conversion as it has a high heat output and is extremely efficient—it exceeds the 2022 European Eco Design regulations. £1,399 (01297 35700; www.aradastoves.com)



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↑ Oval chrome ceiling rack by AGA Cookshop, £249.99 (0800 804 6296; www.agacockshop.co.uk)



↑ Selection of *ikat*-print cushions by Pentreath & Hall, from £110 (020-7430 2526; www.pentreath-hall.com)



← Trianon mirror from OKA, £425 (0844 815 7380; www.okadirect.com)

→ Rare-breed sheepskin rugs by The Fabulous Fleece Company, from £55 each (07796 801818; www.thefabulousfleececompany.co.uk)



← The Everhot range is comprised of Britain's most energy-efficient heat-storage cookers. They run on electricity and are extremely flexible—you can use the hob without firing up the whole cooker. They come in a variety of sizes: the Everhot 60 is £4,755 and the **Everhot 100i** (left) is £8,120 (www.everhot.co.uk; 01453 890018)

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↓ The new Charnwood Bembridge is Defra-exempt for burning wood in smoke-control areas and under 5kW, so perfect for a city sitting room. £996 (www.charnwood.com; 01983 537777)



↑ Hortense poppy placemat by William Yeoward, £19.95 (020-7349 7828; www.williamyeoward.com)



→ Antique copper-and-gold floor lamp from MADE, £189 (0344 257 1888; www.made.com)

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A close-up photograph of two roe deer heads facing each other. The deer have light brown fur and large, dark, pointed antlers. Their ears are visible, and they appear to be in a natural, outdoor setting with a blurred background.

Set your sights on roe

They're delectable to eat, but stalking a roe deer for the table requires skill and guile, says gamekeeper and experienced stalker David Whitby, who makes the case for a more robust cull of these pretty but too-prevalent deer

IT was the tiniest movement, the flicker of an ear, that cost the roebuck its life. Browsing tightly into the hedge, he was taking advantage of April's bramble buds and fresh green shoots, a welcome addition to his diet of winter corn and whatever was left on the forest floor.

Despite his rusty coat blending into a hedgerow of browns, greens and shadows, the animal's fate was sealed. A keen sense of smell and acute hearing are of little use when your predator lies upwind and is silent; being fleet of foot with an 80-yard start is no good when a bullet is chasing you.

The stalker's sharp eyesight picks up the buck's slight movement and his rubber-coated binoculars do the rest. The thickness of neck and shape of back tell him it's no youngster: coronets large and bedded well down, ears torn from fighting—this is an old boy and right for the cull. Slowly lowering himself into the prone position, the stalker looks through the scope. The buck reaches up and takes another mouthful of bramble buds, jaws moving rhythmically from side to side, and steps back from the hedge.

'Wait for him to turn broadside,' the stalker thinks to himself, as the animal takes a pace forward and seems to look directly at him. 'Cross hairs just right of shoulder and down a little, shallow breath, gently exhale through slightly pursed lips and squeeze the trigger.' The morning peace is momentarily shattered by the crack of a rifle shot.

The stalker chambers another round, applies the safety catch and lies still for a moment, surveying the land. A cock pheasant crows and a lark takes to the air; peace and tranquility are restored. Shouldering his rifle, the stalker moves down to bleed, gralloch and carry the animal out: liver for breakfast and roast haunch of venison for Sunday lunch.

For roe-deer stalkers, there is nothing as magical as the pursuit of these special little animals. Deer have acute senses of hearing and smell, with roe being no exception. Any competent stalker will move slowly and silently and always face the wind. To hunt such a wonderful animal, in the early morning in the British countryside, is a privilege that not all will wish to share or indeed understand that it is an undoubtedly necessity. Man is the ultimate apex predator and is now wholly responsible for keeping the balance of wildlife, a task we are making a rather poor job of.

Every stalker has two overriding priorities: safety and a clean kill, preferably without the animal being aware of the stalker's presence. It's a contradiction of emotions that we find these animals so beautiful yet so exciting to pursue, but then the same applies to all fieldsports: respect, but also

a far deeper, almost impossible to describe emotion should be present in true hunters.

Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, but few would disagree that roe are among the most alluring and fascinating of our mammals. Indeed, it may be argued that their natural history is a stark contradiction to their graceful, dainty, slender beauty. Bucks will—and frequently do—fight to the death, rather like the pretty little robin that visits your garden: when it's time to be territorial, a no-holds-barred scrap ensues.

• The morning peace is momentarily shattered by the crack of a rifle shot •

Does have a ruthlessly hard side to their nature, too. They generally give birth to twins and, in more than 30 years of working with these animals, I've witnessed several triplets. At as young as 11 months, their offspring from the previous year are driven away and forced to fend for themselves—when the doe is about to give birth, last year's kids are no longer welcome. More deer would not only attract predators toward the helpless newborns, but would also compete for food. Harsh behaviour, but Nature is often harsh.

Recent years have seen all deer species burgeoning, but this hasn't always been the case. By 1700, roe had disappeared from Wales, were all but extinct from England and were scarce in Scotland. Although I have yet to see documented proof, it's said that Petworth in West Sussex was the only place in southern England that held on to a tiny population.

Reintroductions took place in the 1800s, but how then did we get from near extinction 300 years ago to today's damaging numbers that impact on native flora and, consequently, fauna? Accepted explanations

include global warming, increased woodland, changing farming practices and loss of large predators, yet I suspect this list excludes a more important reason.

Here are the hard facts. First, all deer populations expand exponentially, just as in the example of placing a single grain of wheat on a chessboard square and doubling the number on each as you move along the board. Increases start slowly, then suddenly run out of control to the extent that there aren't sufficient grains in the world to accommodate the last squares. Second, to control population increases of any animal, you need to kill females. This may seem obvious, but the reason for its failure is paramount to the current situation.

In 1985, I was receiving about £1.20 per lb for venison; now, I get about £1.20 per lb. If we index-link that figure, a similar carcass value should equate to £2.73 per lb, which would make a 30lb roe doe worth more than £80, rather than the current £36.

The situation was further exacerbated when, for several years between 1985 and the present time, venison became practically worthless. I remember when there was no market for just about any game meat. This naturally led to few, if any females, being shot, which, in turn, caused a serious population hoist.

Despite the fact that, today, there are more stalkers than ever before, most are sunny-evening antler collectors. The 'hard yards' of deer control are made on dull, cold February mornings, when an £80 reward would be so much more inviting than £36. It could even be argued that, with amateurs shooting more bucks than does, we're actually making more food available for the females and compounding the problem with higher doe and kid winter-survival rates.

Although the increase in range of roe deer is a welcome addition to the countryside, just as with all creatures, population control is essential and that can only be achieved through a robust doe cull. ↗

The roe down

- Roe and red deer are Britain's only native deer species. According to *The Whitehead Encyclopedia of Deer*, there are three subspecies of roe: European (*Capreolus capreolus*), Siberian (*Capreolus pygargus*) and Chinese (*Capreolus bedfordi*)
- There are estimated to be more than 500,000 roe in Britain—those in East Anglia mostly originate from Germany
- The damage roe deer do to trees is impacting on populations of woodland birds, such as nightingales
- The rut takes place largely at the end of July and early August, thus enabling the bucks a recovery time and rich autumn feeding prior
- Natural predators include foxes, badgers and larger birds of prey
- The does have embryonic diapause (delayed implantation). After mating in late July, the embryo floats freely in the uterus and doesn't attach and develop until December/January, thus preventing winter births
- The original Bambi was a roe kid—Disney changed it to a white-tailed deer for the American market
- In England and Wales, the close shooting season for bucks is November 1–March 31 and April 1–October 31 for does. In Scotland, it's October 21–March 31 for bucks and April 1–October 20 for does



Towers of strength

A beautifully preserved medieval manor with a turbulent past has arrived on the market

TO DAY sees the launch in COUNTRY LIFE, through Knight Frank (020-7861 1093), at a guide price of £3 million, of historic, Grade I-listed Mortham Tower, three miles south-east of Barnard Castle on the North Yorkshire/Durham border—arguably one of the North of England's best preserved and most picturesque medieval fortified manor houses. Despite a turbulent past, it has changed hands only five times in the past 700 years.

‘Mortham Tower and a few gravestones were all that was left when the village was sacked by the Scots’

Set in some 80 acres of formal gardens and richly wooded parkland on the northern edge of the ancient Rokeby estate of which it was once a part, Mortham Tower stands on high ground overlooking the confluence of the Rivers Tees and Greta—a setting described by Sir Walter Scott in his epic poem *Rokeby* as ‘eminently beautiful, occupying a high bank, at the bottom of which the Greta winds out of the dark, narrow and romantic dell... and flows onward through a more open valley to meet the Tees, about a quarter of a mile from the castle’. A few years later, following a stay at Rokeby Park, J. M. W. Turner painted the same scene in *The Meeting of the Waters*.

Originally a Norman pele tower built to protect the prosperous village of Mortham against ‘reivers’ from the Scottish Borders bent on plunder, the tower and a few gravestones were all that was left when the village was



sacked by the Scots following their victory at Bannockburn in 1314. The Rokeby ancestral home was burnt to the ground at about the same time.

By then, Sir Thomas Rokeby, one of the generals who finally defeated the Scots at the Battle of Neville’s Cross in 1346, had acquired the neighbouring Mortham estate through his marriage to the heiress of its owner, Adam Maunsell, and the Rokebys moved to Mortham, where Sir Thomas built the first additions to the tower.

With security in mind, he constructed the Great Hall beside the Tower and the east and west wings to form the courtyard, which he enclosed on the

‘Singularly elegant’: Mortham Tower (top), Co Durham, was originally a Norman pele tower. The Great Hall (above) is one of the additions built by Sir Thomas Rokeby in the 14th century. £3m

south side with a battlemented wall that Scott later pronounced ‘singularly elegant’. The tower was again rebuilt by Rokeby’s descendants in the 15th century, when the Great Chamber, the Inner Chamber and the Low Parlour were added on the north side.

By the early 1600s, the Rokebys found themselves in financial difficulties and, in 1611, the Rokeby estate was bought by William Robinson, a wealthy London merchant, who went on to acquire most of Mortham in 1616. The Rokeby family managed to hang on at Mortham Tower until after the Civil War, when it, too, passed to the Robinsons.

In the early 18th century, Sir Thomas Robinson—a passionate admirer of Palladian architecture—not wanting to live in a medieval tower house, built Rokeby Park, described by Christopher Hussey (COUNTRY LIFE, July 6, 1945) as ‘a stately little Palladian mansion’, on the site of the old family house, after which Mortham was downgraded to farm use. Eventually, Sir Thomas, too, was forced by debt to sell the Rokeby estate (including Mortham) to the Morritt family, in whose hands it remained until 1975.



Rose-coloured in Cumbria

ACROSS the county border in Cumbria, Knight Frank (0131-222 9600) quote a guide price of £2.95m on behalf of the Church Commissioners for 'one of the most significant houses in the North of England'. Grade I-listed Rose Castle (*above*) at Dalston, in the picturesque Caldew valley, eight miles south of Carlisle, was home to the bishops of Carlisle from 1233 to 2009. The imposing, 16,200sq ft, red-sandstone mansion, set in 193 acres of formal gardens, woods and farmland on the banks of the River Caldew, was built on the site of an earlier castle, probably in the late 13th century, with licences to crenellate—for protection against the Scots—granted in 1336 and 1355.

Altered and extended by successive bishops over the centuries, Rose Castle was partly destroyed during the Civil War and substantially rebuilt in the 19th century by the architects Thomas Rickman and Anthony Salvin. For sale as a whole or in three lots, the castle has accommodation on three floors, including some grand reception rooms, a Gothic-style chapel and two bedroom floors, which could easily be adapted to create eight bedroom suites, says selling agent Ran Morgan.

structure and adapting it cleverly and sympathetically to modern requirements, they have succeeded in bringing back to life an historic building without prejudicing its archaeological significance'.

The same principles have been enthusiastically embraced by the present owners, John McDonnell, an internationally renowned Chancery lawyer with a passion for castles, and his wife, Susan, who bought the house in 1996. Over the years, they have painstakingly transformed a 15th-century *monument historique* into a warm and welcoming family home, with the introduction, for example, of underfloor heating in the Low Parlour, using limestone recovered from the River Greta.

Alterations were mainly confined to removing unsightly or inappropriate additions, such as the breeze-block wine-cellars created by one previous owner, a false ceiling added by another and the stud walls used to divide the Great Hall into servants' quarters in Mrs Rhodes-Moorhouse's day. The east wing has been arranged as a self-contained, four-bedroom 'cottage' for the McDonnells' children and grandchildren.

Surrounded by the Rokeby estate, Mortham Tower is a timeless country retreat that, thanks to the local government reorganisation of the early 1970s, now finds itself in Durham, not Yorkshire. And prospective purchasers may be relieved to note that, due to its 'mixed-use' status, the property now carries a Stamp Duty liability of only 4%.

With 7,093sq ft of living space in the main building (and a further 1,681sq ft in the east wing), Mortham Tower is not over-large, having essentially five main reception rooms—the double-height Great Hall and the parlour/dining room on the ground floor and the Great Chamber/library, the Inner Chamber/study and the Long Room/drawing room on the first floor—plus master- and guest-bedroom suites, three further bedrooms and two further bathrooms.

In addition to its 70 acres of parkland, 10 acres of grounds around the house include a courtyard garden, a west garden, a kitchen garden, five acres of bluebell woods, a tennis court and a Grade II-listed 'Roman' farmyard built by Sir Thomas Robinson.



The Great Chamber is currently used as a sitting room and has beautiful period features, including a heavily moulded oak ceiling

Mortham was much admired by Scott, who regularly visited his friend J. B. S. Morritt, a noted collector of art and antiquities, at Rokeby Park. Morritt responded by building an artificial cave, cut into the limestone cliff below Mortham, where Scott could sit and write poetry.

Although neglected in the early 20th century, Mortham was rescued by Linda Rhodes-Moorhouse (*née* Morritt), who bought the house from her brother in 1938. Its renovation by the architects David Hodges and Kenneth Peacock was grandly approved by Hussey, who judged that 'by restricting themselves to making good the



Ready for the weekend

With London house prices stabilising, more buyers are taking advantage of the value gap between the city and country and buying a weekend idyll, finds Arabella Youens

WHEN four-bedroom Flintham Cottage in Oaksey, north Wiltshire, went on the market with the Cirencester office of Knight Frank (01285 659771) just two weeks ago, it quickly notched up 27 viewing appointments made by eager buyers. The secret to its popularity? ‘It ticks many boxes,’ explains Alice White, who is handling the sale and has already received offers above its £875,000 guide price.

The Cotswold-stone cottage stands on the edge of a popular village, which has a shop/post office, a good pub and a primary school. It’s in excellent condition and has a large kitchen/breakfast room with an Aga and a garden of 1½ acres. ‘We’ve had interest from couples who are retiring and looking to downsize and from families attracted by the good schools in the area, but the bulk of interest has been from London-based families looking for a weekend home in the countryside. That market is definitely back in business,’ says Alice.

David Carter of Savills in Guildford (01483 796827) agrees. ‘Over the past 18 months, we’ve seen the return of the weekend-home buyer in West Sussex and the countryside surrounding the Surrey Hills, with the number of active requirements for second homes probably doubling. Budgets usually start at about £800,000 and the must-have element is a quiet and rural location that



Ticking the boxes: four-bedroom Flintham Cottage in Oaksey, north Wiltshire, is an ideal weekend family getaway. £875,000 through Knight Frank (01285 659771)

is accessible relatively easily from London.’ He believes that the rise of interest from these buyers has been fuelled by the increase in London prices, which has allowed some owners to take money out of their main residence to buy the weekend idyll. ‘Anywhere that needs work is usually off the agenda,’ explains David, ‘because these buyers want easy retreats that they can start using immediately.’

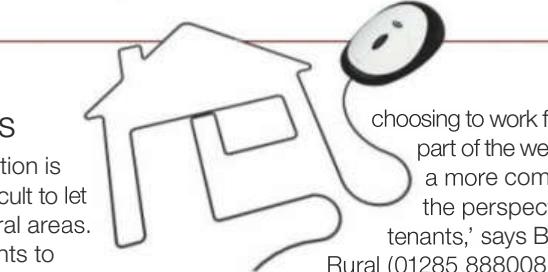
Low maintenance is another key concern for a weekend cottage. ‘The term “lock up and leave” is more often associated with city-centre apartments,’ says Mark Wheeler of Hamptons International (01483 572864). ‘But there are definitely country houses that are locked up and left on a weekly

basis and, for this reason, security and low maintenance are paramount. Weekend-house buyers want their property to be well-positioned and secure and to not require much upkeep, so it can be enjoyed after a long week at work.’

Another sector of the weekend-home market proving popular with buyers is coastal properties. Nick Evans of Humberts says that most of the enquiries he receives for second homes in Somerset and Dorset come with a list of three top ingredients: a sea view, access to good restaurants and contemporary rather than traditional architecture.

‘More and more people are deciding to take “staycation” breaks,’ says Jeremy Campbell-Harris, who heads up the Humberts country-house department (020-7594 4746). ‘Buyers are looking for somewhere to host friends and family and a place to escape to, where they can forget about the stresses that come with living in the city.’

For most weekend buyers, location is the number one concern, with agents saying that two hours from London is about as far as anyone wants to go on a Friday night. ‘West Surrey, Buckinghamshire and Hampshire are among the most popular locations,’ says Mark. ‘Sussex and Kent have seen less activity, but offer greater value for money.’



Broadband blights

Slow broadband connection is making it increasingly difficult to let residential property in rural areas. Nearly 70% of respondents to a Savills survey confirmed that poor download times put potential tenants off renting a property and lead to longer vacant periods—regardless of the condition of the house in question.

The lack of high-speed broadband also has an impact on the rentability of commercial office space in the countryside. ‘But with more people

choosing to work from home for at least part of the week, it’s also becoming a more common question from the perspective of residential tenants,’ says Ben Knight of Savills Rural (01285 888008).

In August, the Government announced proposals to ‘unleash the full potential’ of the countryside, including a pledge to provide fast and reliable broadband to 95% of the UK by 2017. However, for many, this will be too late and an increasing number of rural estates are taking the initiative to find their own solutions, say Savills.

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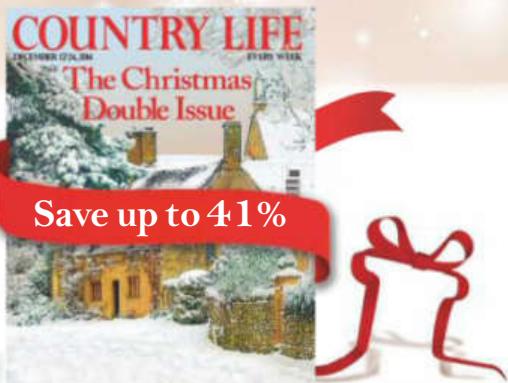


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Property news



Country-house weddings

Somerset, £1.2 million

Rumwell Park, Taunton

7 bedrooms, one-bedroom integral annexe, summerhouse, 2 acres

Jackson-Stops & Staff (01823 325144)

Built in an Italianate style and Grade II listed, this house has been used, until recently, as both a wedding and events venue and a well-sized family home. The main reception rooms enjoy commanding views towards the Blackdown Hills in the distance.



Contemporary millhouse

West Sussex, £2.325 million

Costers Mill, West Lavington

6 bedrooms, study, one-bedroom barn, millstream, 2.85 acres

Jackson-Stops & Staff (01730 812357)

Originally a watermill with an adjoining cottage, Costers Mill is now one house with contemporary interiors that introduce lots of light and make the most of the views over the gardens and grounds. There is a modern country kitchen, which has clean, contemporary lines, as well as an Aga.

Country kitchens



Wiltshire, £1.5 million

Manor Farm, Burbage
Humberts (01672 552070)

The current owners have refurbished this unlisted country house in a popular village close to Marlborough. The kitchen, with its electric Aga and walk-in larder, leads to a light orangery, which works as both a spacious dining room and living area.



Leicestershire, £1.5 million

The Grange, Cadeby
Alexanders (0115-851 2211)

This seven-bedroom former rectory sits centrally within a lively village. It has a new atrium kitchen, which opens out onto a terrace with views over the garden at the back of the house.



Cumbria, £1.45 million

Brackenburn, Manesty
Savills Smiths Gore (01228 546400)

Overlooking Derwentwater and within reach of Keswick, this house was once the home of author Sir Hugh Walpole. The Catbells fell forms a dramatic backdrop and the gardens have been open through the National Gardens Scheme.

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Licence to kill: Martin McDonagh's *Hangmen*, dealing with the abolition of capital punishment, is 'both savagely funny and morally disturbing'

Hold the front page

Michael Billington rounds up the new plays that are going to be making headlines

IT'S been a good week for new plays. Pride of place, however, must go to Martin McDonagh's *Hangmen* at the Royal Court, partly because there is a sense of the prodigal son returning.

Between 1996 and 2003, Mr McDonagh made his name with a remarkable succession of plays, from *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* to *The Pillowman*. After a decade or more largely devoted to cinema, he's now back with a play that stuns with its narrative power and evocation of a time when hanging camouflaged severe miscarriages of justice.

The bulk of the action is set in an Oldham pub in 1965—the year that a Private Members'

Bill saw the abolition of capital punishment. The pub's owner, Harry Wade, is a former deputy hangman who enjoys local celebrity status and who, while feigning discretion, is more than happy to boast of his past skills to his bar-room cronies or an inquisitive journalist. But Harry's seemingly secure life is threatened by the arrival of a brash Cockney lad, Mooney, and the simultaneous disappearance of his own shy teenage daughter, Shirley.

It would be wrong to reveal more of the plot. But the play grips the viewer on any number of levels. One is always eager to know what happens next. It's also fascinating to realise that the glibly

articulate Mooney might have stepped out of Joe Orton's *Entertaining Mr Sloane* or Harold Pinter's *The Homecoming*, both dating from the early 1960s. Through the enveloping mystery, Mr McDonagh even makes a number of serious points: how do people licensed to kill by the state ever lose their appetite for the job and how can anyone ever be absolutely sure that justice has been done and the right person hanged?

Matthew Dunster's production perfectly catches the spirit of a play that is both savagely funny and

morally disturbing. Anna Fleischle's set also precisely captures the smoke-filled atmosphere of a 1960s snug and the acting is first rate.

David Morrissey is full of bow-tied bravura as the pint-pulling former hangman, Johnny Flynn outdoes him in swagger as the cocky intruder and there is first-rate support from Bronwyn James as the nervy Shirley and John Hodgkinson as the authentic executioner, Albert Pierrepont. I just hope the play, which is packing out the Royal Court, gets a swift transfer to the West End. ➤



Love and labour lost: James Doherty is the embodiment of missed opportunity and unfulfilled dreams in *Eventide*



Sylvia strikes back

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In terms of style and subject, but not of quality, Barney Norris's *Eventide* at the Arcola provides a total contrast. I praised Mr Norris's first play, *Visitors*, in this column a year ago for its extraordinary understanding of both dementia and enduring love among the elderly. Now, his second play, set in the back garden of a Hampshire village pub, shows a similar sympathy with the missed opportunities and unfulfilled dreams of the young and early middle-aged.

There are only three characters: John, a heavy-drinking publican, deserted by his wife and now bought out by a big brewery chain. Then, there is his young friend Mark, grieving over his failed hopes and the death of the girl he loved. The third character is the outwardly cheery Liz, who drives a long way for the pleasure of playing the village organ and who believes in the binding power of the Anglican tradition.

I myself love old hymns and the moment when Liz and John quietly join forces to sing *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind* is overwhelmingly touching. But it is a mark of Mr Norris's skill as a playwright that the poignancy is punctured by a brutally tactless remark from John that

destroys any hope he and Liz have of a future together.

Beautifully directed by Alice Hamilton for Up In Arms and impeccably acted by James Doherty, Ellie Piercy and Hasan Dixon, *Eventide* tours in the coming weeks to Bury St Edmunds, Oxford, Salisbury and Bristol. I urge you to catch it if you can.

Mr Foote's Other Leg, the week's third new play, appears at Hampstead Theatre and is based by Ian Kelly on his biography of the same title. It certainly has a bizarre tale to tell: that of Samuel Foote, an 18th-century comedian, dramatist and theatre manager with a talent for cross-dressing, who pursued his multiple careers in spite of the loss of a leg in a riding accident.

It was a life, as Oscar Wilde might have said, crowded with incident and Wilde comes to mind more than once as the convention-defying Foote gets into trouble with the law and is urged to flee to France when he is publicly accused of sodomy.

At times, you feel Mr Kelly has tried to cram in too much—not just Foote's story, but the rise of women players, Georgian theatre history, 18th-century advances in surgery and the study of electricity. But, although

Nobby Clark; Simon Annand; Topher McGrillis/RSC



Mr Foote's Other Leg: the tale of a one-legged, cross-dressing comedian



What's new

Farinelli and the King (above) Claire van Kampen's fascinating play about the healing power of music stars Mark Rylance as Spain's French-born Philippe V. Until December 5 at Duke of York's, London WC2 (0844 871 7627)

Medea Kate Fleetwood stars as the child-murdering heroine in Rupert Goold's production of Euripides's tragedy. Until November 14 at Almeida, London N1 (020-7359 4404)

The Father Acclaimed in Bath and at the Tricycle, Florian Zeller's play about dementia finally arrives in the West End. Until November 21 at Wyndham's, London WC2 (0844 482 5120)

Book now

Dr Seuss's The Lorax Allegedly one of David Cameron's favourite books, this environment-friendly children's classic makes it to the stage in a new version by David Greig. From December 2 at the Old Vic, London SE1 (0844 871 7628)

Last chance to see

Hecuba (right) Marina Carr's highly original take on the victimised Trojan queen boasts a commanding performance from Derbhle Crotty. Until October 17 at The Swan, Stratford-upon-Avon (0844 800 1110)



Give this a miss

Dinner With Saddam An uneasy mix of low farce and serious politics in a play about the man you'd least like to come to dinner. Until November 14 at Menier Chocolate Factory, London SE1 (020-7378 1713)

the play is a ramshackle affair, it is held together by the magnetic force of Simon Russell Beale's central performance. He brings out all of Foote's waspishness, wit, physical courage and emotional vulnerability as he finds himself the victim of society's unbending rules.

Dervla Kirwan as the large-hearted Peg Woffington, Joseph Millson as an unhistorically tall David Garrick and Mr Kelly himself as the future George III are all very good and Richard Eyre's direction does justice to the

abundant vitality of a play that adds to the gaiety of the nation.

'*Hangmen*' until October 10 (020-7565 5000); '*Eventide*' until October 17 (020-7503 1646); '*Mr Foote's Other Leg*' until October 17 (020-7722 9301)

At a glance

Hangmen

★★★★★

Eventide

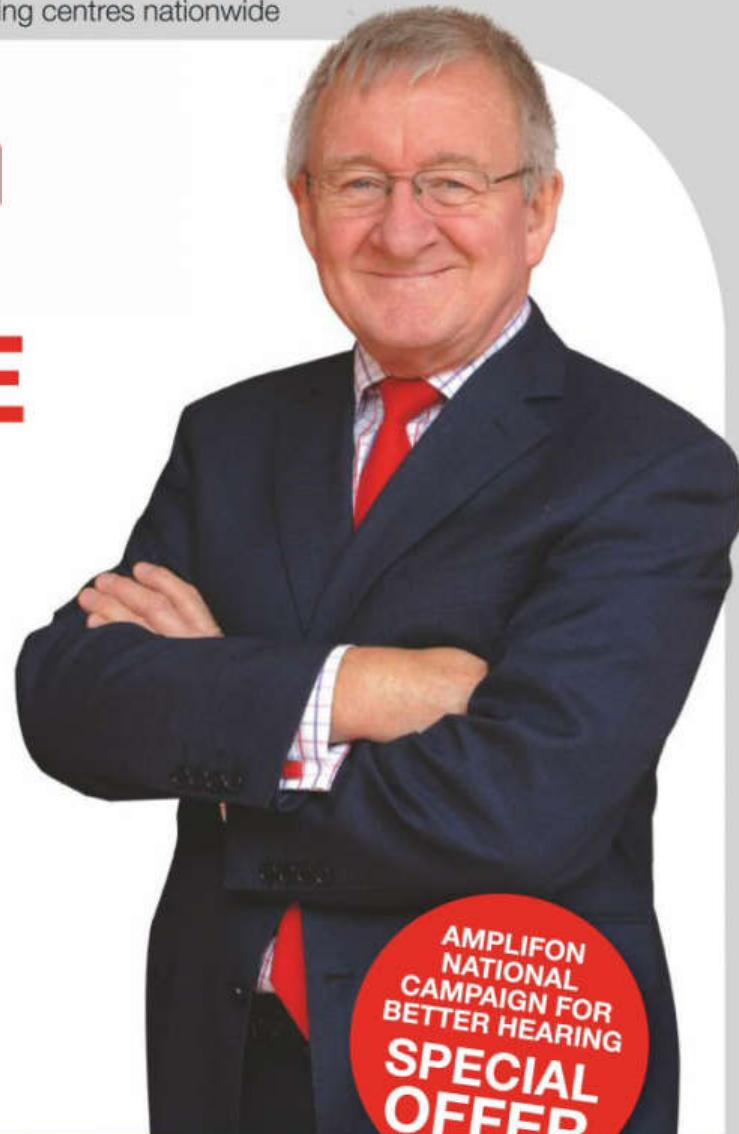
★★★★★

Mr Foote's Other Leg

★★★★★



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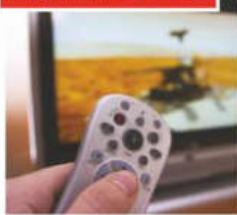


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Portraits of the inner man

The National Gallery's new exhibition of portraits by the Spanish Enlightenment artist offers psychological insights into the characters of his sitters, says Susan Jenkins



Goya's ambitious portrait group *The Family of the Infante Don Luis de Borbón* includes a playful self-portrait

THE Spanish artist Francisco de Goya y Lucientes (1746–1828), was recognised as one of the greatest portrait painters of his age. Charles IV of Spain appointed him as his First Court Painter in 1799, (the highest position of an artist at Court). The National Gallery's exhibition 'Goya: The Portraits', which opens today, is the first ever to focus solely on the artist's portraiture.

The curator Xavier Bray has brought some 70 of Goya's most outstanding portraits to England, many on loan from Spanish private collections. Several have never been seen before in England and Dr Bray hopes that the National Gallery's visitors will respond to Goya's originality, because his work was 'different to anything else going on at the time'.

He believes that the portraits shed light on the artist's own life and career as much as on those of his sitters and thinks that visitors will enjoy the psychological insights offered in the works and the 'informal quality of Goya's portraits, their bravura

technique and their honest and accessible style'.

Goya rose to fame during the period of Napoleonic expansion in Europe, when French Revolutionary and Enlightenment ideas were becoming popular in Spain. His first portraits were commissioned by Charles III's younger brother, Infante Don Luis, during his period of exile from Court. *The Family of the Infante Don Luis de Borbón*, Goya's ambitious group portrait painted in 1783–84, proclaims both Don Luis's family values and the talents of the portraitist himself, as Goya appears at his easel on the left-hand side of the canvas.

Many of Goya's sitters were Spanish aristocrats and intellectuals, several of whom were sympathetic to modern Enlightenment views. The sympathisers included the kindly Duke of Osuna, whose family portrait depicting the Duke and Duchess with their children (with the family dog peeping out from between the children's legs) is one of the artist's early masterpieces.

Another celebrated Enlighten-

ment figure and reformer was Goya's friend Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, appointed Minister for Religion and Justice in 1798, the year in which he sat to Goya for a pensive portrait, which is exhibited for the first time in a generation alongside its probable pendant, the portrait of First Minister Francisco de Saavedra.

As official portrait painter to the Spanish Court, Goya frequently depicted members of the royal family, including the notoriously ugly Charles III wearing hunting dress—Casanova said that he 'looked like a sheep'. In 1799, the year he became First Court Painter, Goya also painted *Charles IV in Hunting Dress* and his wife, the notoriously vain Queen Maria Luisa of Parma. He also, in 1815, portrayed Charles IV's successor, the reactionary Ferdinand VII, who had been restored to the Spanish throne the year before, only to suppress the new constitution.

Almost as important as his royal commissions was the patronage of the impulsive and capricious Duchess of Alba, celebrated for her beauty and charisma. The

exhibition has succeeded in bringing Goya's last portrait of her (painted in 1797) before a British audience—only the second time that it has left the USA.

Dr Bray maintains that Goya's portraits 'act as a portal into his own life—who he was and who he knew'. The artist's most revealing work can be seen not in the official Court portraits, but in his self-portraits and sketches of family and friends, which are observant, affectionate and inventive. Goya frequently depicts himself holding the viewer in an intense gaze, as, for instance, in *Self-Portrait in his Studio* of 1793–5 and the water-colour *Self-Portrait after Illness of 1792–3*—soon after painting this, he became deaf.

One of the most moving of these works, *Self-portrait with Dr Arrieta* (1820), shows Goya tugging at the bedclothes as his doctor, Eugenio Arrieta, offers him a drink. The bottom of the painting is inscribed: 'Goya, thankful to his friend Arrieta for the skill and care with which he saved his life during his short



This is only the second time that Goya's last portrait of his beautiful patron the Duchess of Alba has left the USA

and dangerous illness, endured at the end of 1819, at seventy-three years of age.'

Goya was devoted to his family, particularly to his only surviving son, Javier, and to his grandson, Mariano. For those whom he loved, portrait painting was an expression of affection and a way of communicating, particularly after he became deaf. His wife, Josefa, whom he described as his 'little barefoot girl', appears in a modest black-chalk sketch, wrapped in a shawl and wearing an elaborate morning cap (1805).

The exhibition ends fittingly with Goya's last completed portrait of his beloved grandson, painted in about 1827. The artist was in exile in France from 1824 to 1828 and painted Mariano's portrait on a short trip to Madrid in the year before his death. He proudly depicts his grandson as a handsome,

wealthy young man, whose position in society has been secured by his grandfather's success.

'Goya: The Portraits' offers British audiences the opportunity to appreciate the quality and artistic development of this greatest of Spanish painters. The artist's strong sense of innovation enabled him to create a new, distinctly Spanish form of portraiture. Visitors to the show will gain an insight into both the public and private aspects of Goya's life and can engage with a painter whose artistic brilliance ensured his survival during one of the most turbulent periods in Spanish history.

'Goya: The Portraits' is at the National Gallery, London WC2, until January 10, 2016 (020-7747 2885; www.nationalgallery.co.uk)

Next week: The work of Paul Storr at London Silver Vaults

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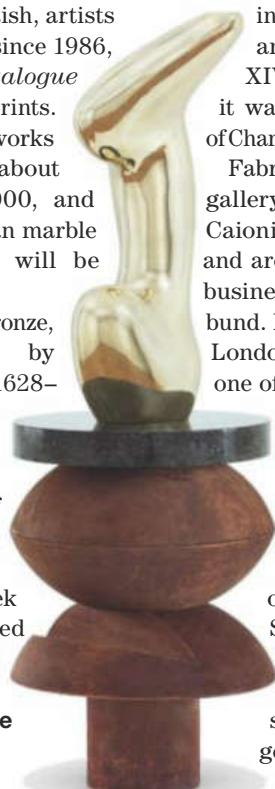
TWO aspects of previous Frieze Masters fairs in Regent's Park have seemed weak to me, but it appears that one of them at least is being addressed for this year's outing between October 14 and 18. In the past, dealers in the older disciplines were encouraged to show at least one contemporary work among their offerings (I'm not sure whether the reverse was true for contemporary galleries). Some managed this with finesse, but the embarrassment of others was painful.

This time, several stands will offer collaborations between older and contemporary dealers, which should be much more effective. Furthermore, Axel Vervoordt, the eminent Belgian dealer and decorator, is exhibiting at Frieze Masters for the first time and his trademark has always been to blend old and new with immense theatrical flair.

Two promising collaborations are between the Tomasso Brothers and Karsten Schubert, and Hauser & Wirth and Moretti. The first will combine Classical to 19th-century portrait busts with Old Masters and works on paper by Bridget Riley (**Fig 6**). Mr Schubert, who has been championing international, and particularly British, artists from his Soho base since 1986, is the author of a *catalogue raisonné* of Riley's prints. At the fair, Riley's works will run from about £80,000 to £120,000, and a 2nd-century Roman marble head of Dionysius will be priced at £500,000.

A very handsome bronze, *Modios Asiatikos* by François Girardon (1628–1715), one of the major Classical sculptors to work on Louis VI's refashioning of Versailles, will be priced at £250,000 (**Fig 3**). The Greek marble that inspired

Fig 1: Bronze, wood and granite sculpture by Hans Arp. With Hauser & Wirth



Turning heads

This year, Frieze Masters will present collaborations between older and contemporary dealers, with exciting results

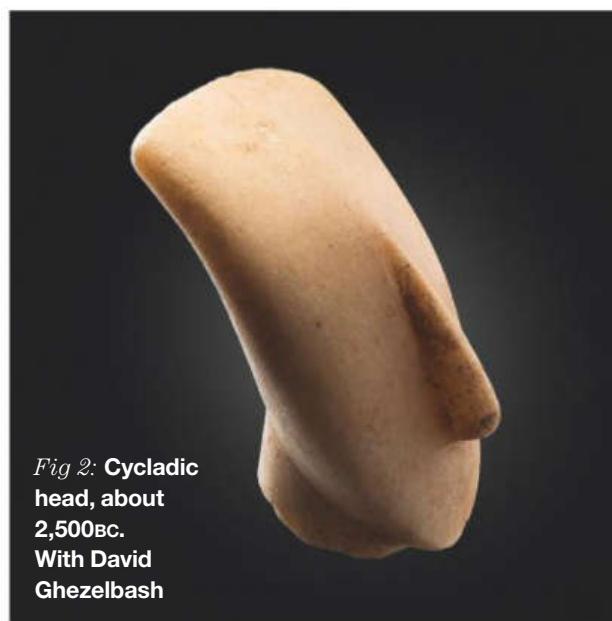


Fig 2: Cycladic head, about 2,500BC. With David Ghezelbash



Fig 3 right: *Modios Asiatikos* by François Girardon. With Tomasso Brothers. **Fig 4 below right:** Andrea della Robbia armorial. With Moretti Fine Art

this bust dates to about the time of Christ and is now in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris. It was discovered in about 1685 in Smyrna, now Izmir, and offered to Louis XIV, but, by 1714, it was in the collection of Chancellor Pontchartrain.

Fabrizio Moretti and his gallery director Gabriele Caioni are both aged 39 and are proof that the art business is not yet moribund. Moretti of Florence, London and New York is one of the most energetic international Old Master dealers, at the same time as taking the lead in the Italian trade. Hauser & Wirth, of Zurich, London, Somerset, New York and Los Angeles, offers modern sculpture by Bourgeois, Arp (**Fig 1**) and others to com-

bine with Moretti's Renaissance works, including a della Robbia armorial (**Fig 4**).

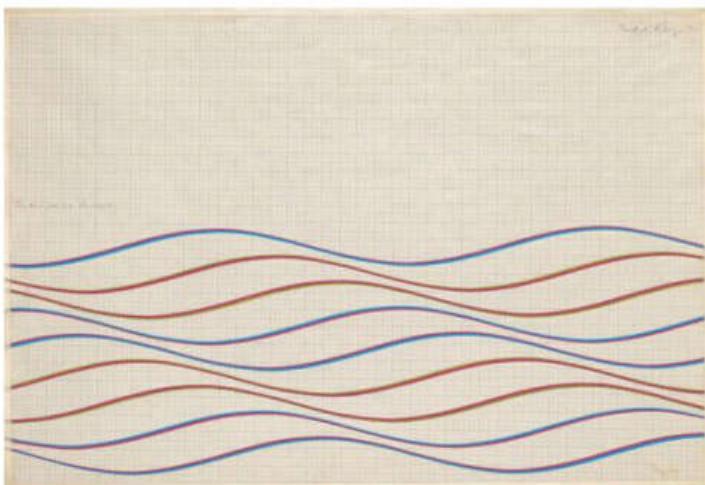
The other perceived weakness at Frieze Masters has been the inclusion of too many second-rank contemporary galleries, especially in the 'Spotlight' section of solo shows, which might be better suited to the sister show at the southern end of the Park. Their upgrade to 'Master' status diluted the impressive quality of their colleagues and is unlikely to have encouraged crossover buying between the fairs.

However, the list of this year's exhibitors looks more reassuring, as does a new section, 'Collections', organised by Sir Norman Rosenthal, who has defined it as 'eight presentations by individual dealers, spanning millennia, which contain within them germs of ideas for exhibitions that could easily take



place at any of the great public institutions in the world. This section will show that it is still possible, with both knowledge and love, to put together outstanding collections of art that demonstrate the highest level of creativity in all different periods of history'.

Throughout the fair, there is still a wide sweep of cultural time, from antiquities with Rupert Wace of London and David Ghezelbash



of Paris (**Fig 2**) and early Oriental ceramics with Berwald, also of London. Sam Fogg will have a mix of medieval works of art and Old Master paintings and two first-time exhibitors will strengthen the medieval displays.

At Maastricht, one of my essential visits is to the stand of the Swiss rare-book dealer Jörn Günther and it will be a great pleasure to see his illuminated manuscripts here, too. One of Dr Günther's recent acquisitions is one of only nine manuscripts of *Livre des faits du bon chevalier Jacques de Lalaing* (**Fig 7**), the Burgundian knight famous for his chivalry during the later part of the Hundred Years War. It was written in about 1480 and illuminated, probably in Bruges, some 40 years later. Until now, it has descended in his family.

The other first-timer in this field is Les Enluminures of Paris, New York and Chicago, which not only offers illuminated manuscripts, but also a glorious assemblage of rings from Roman times to the Middle Ages.

Notable Old Master paintings will include a strong Dutch contingent, with a portrait by Cornelis de Vos (1584–1651) offered by Amsterdam specialist Salomon Lilian, a Golden Age feast with Johnny van Haeften of London, a range from Italian gold-ground works to Fuseli with Richard Feigen of New York and a generous mix from Old Master to Modern British, by way of sporting, marine and Impressionist, with Richard Green.

A painting that is not particularly flamboyant, but which I expect to appeal to me greatly,



Fig 5 above left: Streams of Lava, Mount Vesuvius (1872) by Giuseppe de Nittis. With Daxer & Marschall. Fig 6 left: Bridget Riley pencil and gouache on paper. With Karsten Schubert. Fig 7 above right: Livre des faits du bon chevalier Jacques de Lalaing. With Jörn Günther

will be with the Munich dealer Daxer & Marschall. Giuseppe de Nittis (1846–84) was born in Puglia, but made his name in Paris. However, in 1870, he returned to Italy for a brief visit that turned into a three-year stay after the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War. He spent part of this time in a village on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius, where he painted *plein-air* studies from Nature, and he was lucky enough to coincide with a period of volcanic activity. Unlike such 18th-century artists as Volaire, Hackert and Wright of Derby, de Nittis was not interested in theatrical pyrotechnics, but close-up details, such as this 5½in by 7½in panel of lava on the mountainside (**Fig 5**).

At first sight, it might seem almost abstract, but the more one studies the rapid, thinly painted oil sketch, the more detail emerges. As the dealer points out, de Nittis was much interested in photography and 'displays his skilful handling of unconventional perspectival effects in this oil

study. The very close-up view of solidified lava streams almost entirely fills the surface of the image. By compressing the motif into a remarkably small format he achieves the urgency of a photograph spontaneously taken and very close to the object. The immediacy of the image is compelling'.

Next week Spurs for the market at Harrogate

Pick of the week



Andrew Edmunds's Soho print shop could be a set for the one where Mrs Humphrey published Gillray. For the fair, he will devote his stand entirely to 100 particularly choice Gillray etchings, some with wonderfully rich original colouring, such as this 14in by 10in *King of Brobdingnag and Gulliver*.

Intruder in the dust

Carla Carlisle finds this account of her native Deep South heartfelt, but somewhat lopsided

Travel

Deep South

Paul Theroux

(Hamish Hamilton, £20 *£18)

FOR half a century, Paul Theroux has wandered around the world, writing about the torments of the road as much as the spirit of places. As one of his sedentary readers, I've been grateful to go with him without incurring a single tick bite.

Deep South is Mr Theroux's 10th travel book. Now aged 74, the hassle of passports, messy money and phrasebooks is over. Totalitarian regimes in airports, with their questioning and stripping, are an indignity too far. He's back in the Mother Country now and all he has to do is amble across his Cape Cod front yard and fasten his seat belt.

Of course, no travel writer worth his notebooks is interested in the interstate-highway monoculture of Ramada Inns and Red Lobsters, certainly not Mr Theroux, who sets out to find the Deep South, with its own past and mythology. No big cities like Atlanta, Nashville and Memphis for him—he sticks to back roads as though the only voice on his SatNav is William Faulkner's wisest character, Ian McCaslin: 'To understand the world, you must first understand a place like Mississippi.'

Southerners believe that the Deep South ended with the violent birth of the New South. On his journey, Mr Theroux discovers that the New South is dead, too, killed by the outsourcing of all those hopeful industries and non-union factories that sent their business abroad. If there is a heart to this book, this is it; all the huge achievements—the end of Jim Crow, the Voting Rights Act, the election of a black president—don't mean a thing if there are no jobs.

Mr Theroux tells a dark and meaningful story. The textile mills



A lot of gas stations in the Deep South are now owned by Indians

‘The huge achievements don’t mean a thing if there are no jobs’

that once thrived have gone to China and Mexico so that Americans can buy cheaper towels at Walmart, the gargantuan chain that killed the Main Streets that used to be the heart of town communities.

It's not just towels that no longer say 'Made in USA'. In the 1990s, millions of acres of cotton (now grown in China) and soybeans (grown on cleared land in the Amazon rainforest) were replaced by catfish farms. The Mississippi Delta became a vast inland sea. Now, that's gone too. You want catfish and hushpuppies? The catfish comes from Vietnam.

There are other revelations, too. Seventy percent of those roadside motels that line backroads are now owned by Indians. All the motels where Mr Theroux spends his nights are owned by Patels, from Surain in Gujarat. The same extended families that operate convenience stores in Britain own the motels and gas stations in the Deep South.

The author doesn't object to the Patels settling in America. His

fury is aimed at former President Clinton for signing the free-trade agreement that he believes led to the exodus of manufacturing—the last nail in the South's coffin. He's outraged that the Clinton Foundation, based in Arkansas, pours millions into Africa, but has never put a dime into Arkansas. He also has it in for Bill Gates, who attacks poverty in Africa, but is blind to the destitution in his homeland.

Mr Theroux observes that the poverty in the Lowcountry of South Carolina, the Black Belt of Alabama, the Ozarks of Arkansas and the Mississippi Delta is more grave than what he witnessed in the distressed parts of Africa and Asia.

At times, I wanted to holler 'Lighten up, Ole Fellow. Find a juke joint, sit down with a cold beer and listen to the Blues'. When he is served fried chicken, corn bread, okra, field peas and fried green tomatoes, my mouth waters, but his never does.

I don't blame Mr Theroux for wanting to make up for the mountains of books by white southern writers by only spending time with black southerners, but it makes his journey culturally and racially lopsided. This is a book worth reading, but I don't think Mr Theroux went home a wiser or happier man. As they say in my Deep South, 'you can take a donkey travelling, but it won't come back a horse'.

Fiction

The Oligarch

Joseph Clyde

(Gibson Square, £8.99 *£8.54)

IT WILL not give away the plot of this thriller too much to say that it's about a Russian billionaire oligarch and his drugs-and-sex-obsessed son living in London and a possible plot to assassinate a Russian president (unnamed), who has recently deployed military force in the Crimea and Ukraine. The background is right up to the minute and wholly plausible, albeit deeply shocking.

It was said that Frederick Forsyth's best-selling *The Day of the Jackal* (1971) was initially turned down by a number of publishers on the grounds that everyone would have known from the beginning that the plot (to assassinate Gen de Gaulle) was going to fail.

I have no idea if this argument was used against *The Oligarch*, but, if so, it would have been an equally inappropriate response: this is a totally gripping and enthralling tale of intrigue and double-crossing, made all the more readable by the racy and convincing dialogue.

If it has a fault, it's perhaps that, by the end, the layers of subterfuge have become so complex that the reader risks being as confused as the protagonists in the story. The hero himself—a former MI5 officer—is deceiving his wife as well as his opponents. Everyone is even more devious than they appear.

When so many different identities are concealed, it's no surprise to learn that the author's own name—Joseph Clyde—is a pseudonym or *nom de plume*. In real life, I remember him (from my own days as a diplomat) under his proper name as a particularly creative colleague who had a very considerable grasp of political and intelligence matters. He deploys his experience and talents to the full in this book, which is, for once, as 'unputdownable' as the cover claims.

John Ure

Interior design

Robert Kime

Alastair Langlands
(Frances Lincoln, £40 *£36)

FOR ANYONE tired of minimalist restraint in decoration, a delicious tonic has arrived in the form of this new book dedicated to the work of Robert Kime. It features 12 houses beautifully photographed by Tessa Traeger, James Mortimer, Fritz von der Schulenburg, Christopher Simon Sykes and others, which together form a compact visual encyclopaedia of comfortable good taste. They illustrate the well-judged balance of simplicity and richness that is the real art of the great interior.

Mr Kime creates rooms that read like still-life paintings, in which strong colour and pattern play vital parts. He has a keen sense of the past—he studied medieval history at Worcester College, Oxford,



Robert Kime reclines in an Art Deco velvet chair in his library

and supported himself as an undergraduate by selling antiques.

We learn of the homes in Wiltshire, Ireland and Provence that he created with his late wife, Helen, and of the select commissions on which he has

worked. Alastair Langlands tells his story with admirable clarity, much of it in the form of extended captions.

There are many surprises, including Mr Kime's own modest-looking holiday cottage in Ireland,

of which the author writes 'Robert approached the decoration and furnishing... in the same way he would a palace' and in which each room is more beguiling than the last.

Dream-like Swangrove Lodge was decorated and furnished—on the insistence of his client, the Duke of Beaufort—with an 'air of mellowness inclining to extinction'.

At Clarence House, the most elegant of occupied Royal residences, Mr Kime deftly helped The Prince of Wales to re-group furniture and paintings he had inherited from Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, and introduced new colours and fabrics. Yet, everything somehow feels as if it has always been thus.

One of his greatest triumphs is the drawing room at South Wraxall Manor, with its glorious plasterwork ceiling and richly carved chimneypiece. Here, again, texture, pattern and provenance contribute to a feeling of mellow, elegant comfort.

Jeremy Musson

Memoir

My Life with Wagner

Christian Thielemann
(Weidenfeld & Nicolson,
£25 *£22.50)

'I WAS positively knocked backwards by Wagner,' writes the conductor Christian Thielemann of a youthful experience, 'and I knew this is it. This is what you must do.' The newly translated *My Life with Wagner*—part memoir, part reflection, part analysis—explores the fascination the composer holds for the man often cited as the foremost interpreter of his music today.

In one broad but illuminating sweep, Mr Thielemann surveys everything from Wagner's distinctive use of orchestration to the schemas of his operas; from the approach of different conductors to the Wagnerian Walhalla of Bayreuth, of which the author was appointed Music Director in June.

His description of what makes this house, which opened in 1876, different from any other, its working methods and the specific

challenges posed by the famously covered orchestra pit—'the mystic abyss'—make fascinating reading.

No account of Wagner can escape the subject of the composer's anti-Semitism. The familiar arguments here reach a predictable conclusion. 'I can't hold Richard Wagner musically responsible, for the misuse of his works by the Nazis.'

Mr Thielemann's skill lies in conveying the power of music in words. His description of *Lohengrin* as 'the purest eroticism expressed as sound', explaining how the different 'amalgamations' of instruments create 'shivers of delight', would surely pique the curiosity of one yet to dip a toe into Wagnerian soundwaves.

Yet, gripping though this may be as an introduction to the composer, it's principally as an insight into the multifaceted art of the conductor that I would recommend this book. To anyone who has ever asked 'What does a conductor actually do?', it offers a fine response.

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A Spool of Blue Thread

Anne Tyler
(Knopf, £18.99 *£14.99)

This is Anne Tyler's 20th novel and reputedly her last. Should she go into retirement with a Booker Prize under one arm? The very idea would provoke a groan from some readers; for others, it's an appropriate accolade for a master of the American family saga.

Here, she invites the reader to the Baltimore home of the Whitshank family, setting the scene for three generations of domestic drama. The critical snobbery towards her is similar to that which distinguishes 'art' from 'craft'. The Whitshank house is impeccably well crafted, so much so that you could walk in through the impressive porch, make yourself a sandwich in the kitchen and have a nap in one of the bedrooms.

If solidity of construction was the thing, this novel would win hands down. Its poise and skill have earned it a place on the shortlist, but it lacks the punch to become a winner. *Matilda Bathurst*

A Brief History of Seven Killings

Marlon James
(OneWorld, £8.99 *£8.54)

Based on the attempted assassination of Bob Marley, Marlon James's story is told in many voices, from local patois to savvy New Yorker and even quasi-colonial English—the cast of main characters totals about 75.

Jamaica was a violent and dangerous place in the 1970s; the grand, sweeping narrative embraces crime lords, drugs barons, CIA agents and innocent bystanders. A kind of *Wolf Hall de nos jours*, the style takes some getting used to.

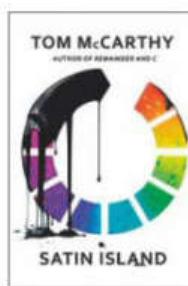
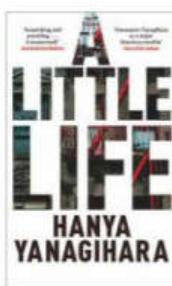
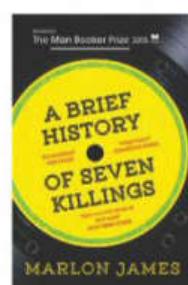
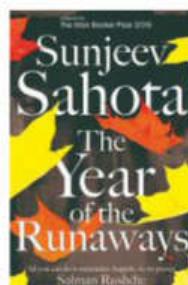
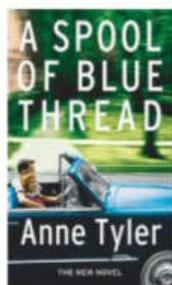
Much of the often eye-wateringly brutal action is based on true stories, although fictional names and euphemisms add an unnecessarily coy nuance. Ambitious and accomplished, but the complexity is sometimes too clunky. An outside bet. *Rupert Uloth*

The Year of the Runaways

Sunjeev Sahota
(Picador, £14.99 *£12.99)
Sunjeev Sahota's first novel, *Ours are the Streets* (2011), confronted

Place your Booker bets

'Terrific arguments... violent but friendly' was the judges' consensus. We assess the six titles shortlisted for this year's Man Booker Prize



the issue of Islamic radicalism in Britain, a debut that won him a place on Granta's decennial list of Best Young Novelists. The list has a habit of predicting the next big names, so it's not surprising that his ambitious new novel has made the Booker shortlist. Whether it's a winner, however, is doubtful.

The plot follows the lives of a group of Indian migrants living together in Sheffield, struggling to find work and attempting to preserve their cultural identity. Although the subject matter is undeniably significant, the treatment is, occasionally, a little saccharine. Characters strive to break free from the caste system; our heroine is pure of heart, yet compromised by circumstance. It's an important book, but not one that demands a second reading. *Leslie Geddes-Brown*

A Little Life

Hanya Yanagihara
(Picador, £16.99 *£14.99)
It didn't seem promising: unpronounceable author's name, Booker

shortlisted, 720 pages long. How wrong you can be. The saga follows four college classmates from teenage to middle age. Haitian JB, a painter; Scandinavian Willem, an actor; rich boy Malcolm, an architect; and damaged foundling Jude (named after the patron saint of lost causes), a lawyer. All become wildly successful.

The epic is gripping, its format pioneering and the prose at once clear, unaffected and poetic. The characters are finely drawn, as is New York, its galleries, A-listers and parties. Apart from a handful of truly evil men, the rest are gentle, kind and thoughtful. Many are often in despair, but remain true. *A Little Life* is melancholic and tragic, yet lifts the spirits and hopes. If it doesn't win the prize, I'll be seriously annoyed.

Leslie Geddes-Brown

Satin Island

Tom McCarthy
(Jonathan Cape, £16.99 *£14.99)
When Tom McCarthy's *C* was shortlisted in 2010, our reviewer wrote 'Oh, dear. Pretentious... Action

that goes nowhere... hard work, but not rewarding'. *Plus ça change*. His latest novel has no character development, plot, speech quotation marks, beginning or end. It's a stream of consciousness full of allusions, borrowings and repetitions from an author who wants no truck with convention, but is, perhaps, too clever to win.

Chapters divided into numbered sections are narrated by U, a disillusioned 'corporate ethnographer' charged with preparing a Great Report by a man of 'visionary vagueness' who's recently won the Koob-Sassen Project contract. Neither U nor I can tell you anything much more about all this.

Recurring metaphors create patterns and spills: an oil leak, a man dropping from a sabotaged parachute, spreading cancer cells, streams of ferry passengers. But, despite brilliant visual imagery and enjoyable riffs, I'm afraid I just got bored—with the going nowhere and the predictable themes of contemporary corporate life. Like U, I felt 'suspended between two types of meaninglessness'. *Mary Miers*

The Fishermen

Chigozie Obioma
(Pushkin Press, £14.99 *£13.49)
Narrated by nine-year-old Benjamin, this debut novel charts the heartbreaking decline of a post-Colonial Nigerian family. A patriarchal father, whose ambition for his four sons plays on the timeless theme of hubris, makes way for the tragedies that follow.

When the father moves away, the brothers enjoy their freedom and, soon, fishing replaces study and anarchy reigns. One day, the boys encounter a prophetic madman, who tells the eldest that he will be killed by one of his brothers. So unfolds a story of wretchedness and redemption—themes that seem to transcend the characters to comment on the whole of Africa, with its many contradictions.

Chigozie Obioma has rightly been compared to Chinua Achebe and this original, beautiful novel sets him up as one of this generation's great voices in African literature.

Geoff Heath-Taylor

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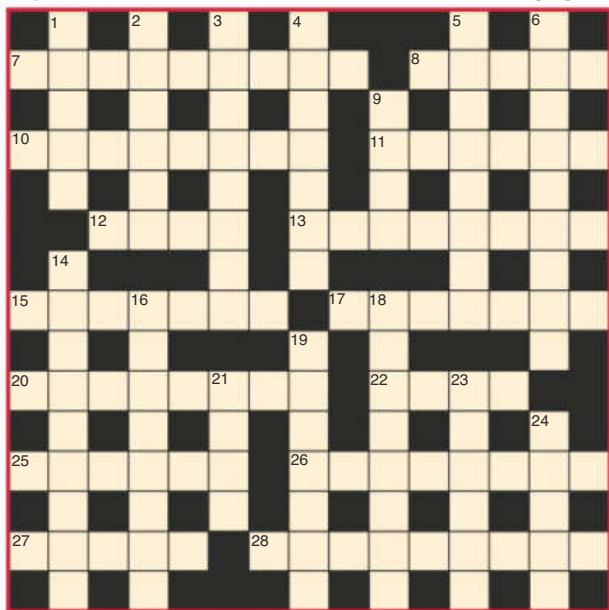
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ACROSS

7. Former test originally examining musical piece (9)
8. In Verdun, it endeavoured to join forces (5)
10. Civic dignitary in island standing by tree (8)
11. Quickly spread Italian sauce round top of roast (6)
12. Time to return and amend copy (4)
13. Wind in Cambs city circling plant (8)
15. Misrepresent girl's breach of duty (7)
17. Petulant desire to strangle snake? (7)
20. Pasta found in a vehicle on entering motorway (8)
22. Excursion narrowly preceding the fall? (4)
25. Mess climber ultimately found in southern headland (6)
26. Huge deficit fossil fuel brought about (8)
27. Ban from Parisian pub (5)
28. Esteemed soldiers taking amphetamine outside court (9)

4401



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SOLUTION TO 4400 (Winner will be announced in two weeks' time)
ACROSS: 1, Bluestocking; 9, Laudatory; 10, Nanny; 11, Padre; 12, Traceable; 14, Aurora; 16, Palmist; 17, Trumpet; 18, Added on; 19, Resultant; 21, Delhi; 22, Stole; 24, Hair sieve; 25, Cantankerous.
DOWN: 1, Blunderbuss; 2, Usage; 3, Spottiest; 4, Oryza; 5, Kennelled; 6, Nun; 7, Elephant grass; 8, Hypertensives; 13, Blind alleys; 15, Repellent; 16, Plant life; 20, Ashen; 21, Disco; 23, Ova.

Winner of 4398 is Eve Dick, Bangor, Co Down.

Bridge

Andrew Robson

IT was a beautiful Sunday morning as I cycled to Richmond upon Thames, our home venue for the third-round Gold Cup match. It was a match we were supposed to win easily, but nothing can ever be taken for granted at bridge.

Here was our first Richmond disaster.

Dealer South
Both vulnerable

♠ A 7 6	♦ Q 3
♥ A 10 7 6 5 4	♥ Q 9 8 3
♦ 3	♦ 7 5
♣ Q J 4	♣ 10 9 7 6 2
♠ 10 8 2	♠ K J 9 5 4
♥ —	♥ K J 2
♦ AQJ108642 W+E	♦ K 9
♣ 5 3	♣ A K 8

- | South | West | North | East |
|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 1♠ | 4♦(1) | 4♠(2) | Pass |
| 5♣(3) | Pass | 6♦(4) | End |
- (1) Preemptive bid, implying a good eight-card suit.
(2) Normal enough guess.
(3) Another guess—a general slam invite. Who can know whether North stretched to bid Four Spades or has something to spare?
(4) Two Aces and a singleton Diamond.

The winning line is to ruff a Diamond in dummy. After winning the Ace of Clubs, lead the King of Diamonds. West wins and leads (say) a second Club. Win (say) in hand and ruff your second Diamond in dummy (this is your twelfth trick). Now, cash Ace of Spades, Spade to the Queen and King, cash Knave of Spades; cross to the Ace of Hearts (West discarding), back to the Knave and the rest are yours. Twelve tricks and slam made. If only.

Our opponent, David Sherman, found a devilish opening lead on our second Richmond slam.

Dealer South
Neither vulnerable

♠ Q 8 6	♦ 7 4 2
♥ A K 8 6	♥ 2
♦ A K Q J 8	♦ 9 6 5 4
♣ 8	♣ S K 10 9 7 3
♠ A 10 9 5	♠ K J 3
♥ Q 5 4 3	♥ J 10 9 7
♦ 10 3 2	♦ 7
♣ 5 4	♣ A Q J 6 2

- | South | West | North | East |
|--------|------|-------|------|
| 1♣ | Pass | 1♦(1) | Pass |
| 1♥ | Pass | 1♠(2) | Pass |
| 1NT(3) | Pass | 6♦(4) | End |
- (1) Mistake to jump when bidding a new suit as responder.
(2) Fourth Suit Forcing—more information please.
(3) Showing a Spade stopper, in addition to his already revealed five Clubs and four Hearts.
(4) Worry about Spades alleviated by partner's One Notrump bid.

I must say I'd have been tempted to lead the Ace of Diamonds with West's hand. However, Nick Simms did very well, preferring the Club lead. Declarer won the Ace and started on Spades, crossing to the Ace and planning to finesse the Knave on the way back. However, East's Queen popped up, so he won the King and cashed the Knave.

Trumps were drawn and now declarer needed to negotiate the Hearts. He knew by now West was very short—eight Diamonds, three Spades and a Club had already been implied or revealed. Declarer hoped West's thirteenth card was a Heart. He crossed to the Ace, planning to finesse the Knave on the way back should West follow.

West discarded, however, so although declarer could cross to the Ace and take the marked finesse of the Knave, then cash the King, East still held the Queen.

Declarer could only cross to the Queen of Clubs and forlornly lead towards the King of Diamonds. West took the Ace, cashed the Queen and that was down one.

West deduced from North's leap to Six Hearts that he probably held the Ace-King of trumps. West found the diabolical lead of a low Heart.

On the lead of say Ace and another Spade, declarer would have played Hearts in the normal fashion, cashing the Ace first (in case of a singleton Queen), then crossing to a top Club and running the Knave, thus picking up West's Queen. Slam made.

When West led a Heart, declarer placed East with the Queen—for who would lead from the Queen of trumps? He rose with the Ace and tried to cash the King. East discarded, declarer cursed and ended up down two.

Mercifully, we squeaked through the match, but the cycle ride back home in the dark was one of relief, not pride in any great play.

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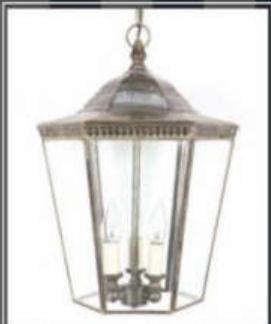
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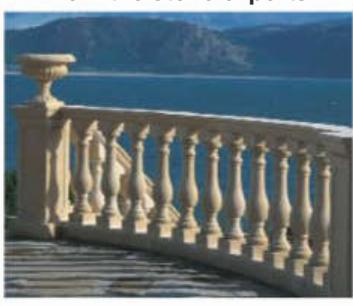
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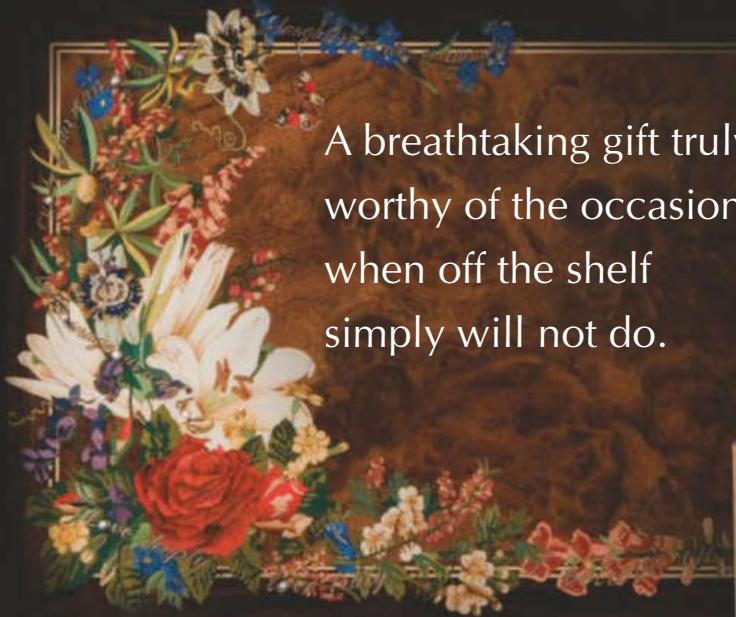
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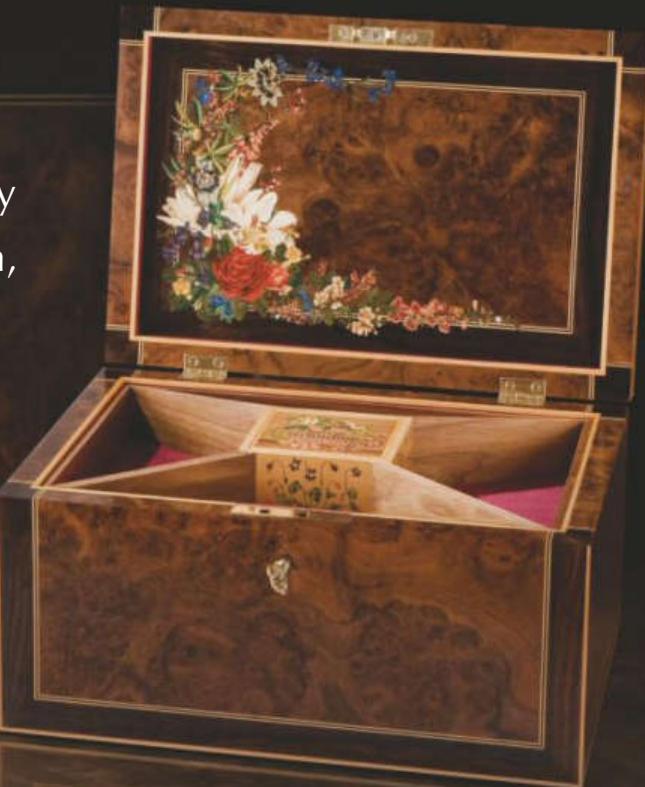
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Hold your horses! That's definitely not zebra

SCORPIONS, ants and grasshoppers can be the next big superfoods say chefs' and 'Zebra meat was really horse' are two headlines (from the same week) that bring out conflicting reactions. Why would you want to eat insects or zebras? Surely, this is some 21st-century macho madness, but on the other hand, we need to diversify in order to feed ourselves and save the planet. Also, my family says they can't face another roast chicken. I need to find a new food.

Customers at a Watford restaurant recently complained when they suspected, correctly, that what they had ordered from a menu of zebra, kangaroo, springbok, antelope and wildebeest was not what came on the plate. The zebra was horse, the wildebeest was venison and the restaurant boss was prosecuted for misinforming customers. He had to pay £3,861 in costs. I'm not sympathetic towards anyone in this story.

I won't be dining at the restaurant in Putney where scorpions, buffalo worms, Mexican grasshoppers, locusts and drinks garnished with ants, which

'smell a bit like petrol but have the texture of caviar', are on offer, despite chefs keen on entomophagy explaining that insects are sustainable and that 'gramme for gramme, they contain the same protein as chicken'.

Unusually, the chefs didn't say that any of the above tasted like chicken, which is what one is often told when asked to eat something one doesn't want to—frogs' legs, squirrel, crocodile. I tried frogs' legs for the first time last week—bony, joined at the hip, a little disconcerting and definitely not like chicken. At a stretch, squirrel, which we once made into a pie, tastes a bit like rabbit crossed with partridge. But I don't want that to sound good. Crocodile, according to a friend who has tried it, really does taste like chicken—fishy chicken. Off chicken. Perhaps that counts.

The chicken comparison is, of course, designed to help us get over any squeamishness. Altering our idea of what is acceptable is all a question of perception. We need to get over the yuck factor. Eating a bug is, admits one of the insect chefs, 'like asking some-

one to eat a cat'. (I wonder if cats taste like chicken.) Perception—and a few years.

It is thought that homo sapiens living somewhere near Benidorm were the first people to try snails and we have, by and large, overcome the yuck factor with them, so perhaps it's just a question of 30,000 years.

‘I wonder
if cats “taste
like chicken”,
too ,’

I say by and large because, on holiday with a friend in Majorca, I was undone by a bowl of snails at a restaurant where the patron was so condescending that, knowing he expected Sophie and I to order ham-and-cheese toasties, we ordered the local speciality.

Minutes later, we were presented with two bowls of grey water, in which bobbed gigantic snail shells without a whiff of garlic butter. The patron stood beside the table to watch as

I, with great difficulty, managed to swallow one. 'He's just pulled these off the garden wall,' Sophie hissed, as she smuggled her snails across the table in paper napkins so that I could secrete them in my basket, to the amazement of the six-year-old at the table beside us.

As soon as possible, we paid and fled, leaving a trail of snail-water drips before dumping the basket in the nearest bin. We never looked back, but we knew that he knew.

Anna has never got over the yuck factor, haunted as she is by the school trip on which the teacher teased the class for being unadventurous as they eyed the snails he had ordered. One boy, Perfect Peter, popped one in his mouth with a smile. Anna watched in horror as he swallowed. It was too late to tell him that he'd just eaten the same snail she'd already chewed and spat out.

'I need a new food,' I say as I look at the chickens (again) in the butcher. Miranda, who is standing next to me, says I just need to experiment a little. She'd had supper with another friend who served a salmon cooked in a pumpkin.

TOTTERING-BY-GENTLY By Annie Tempest

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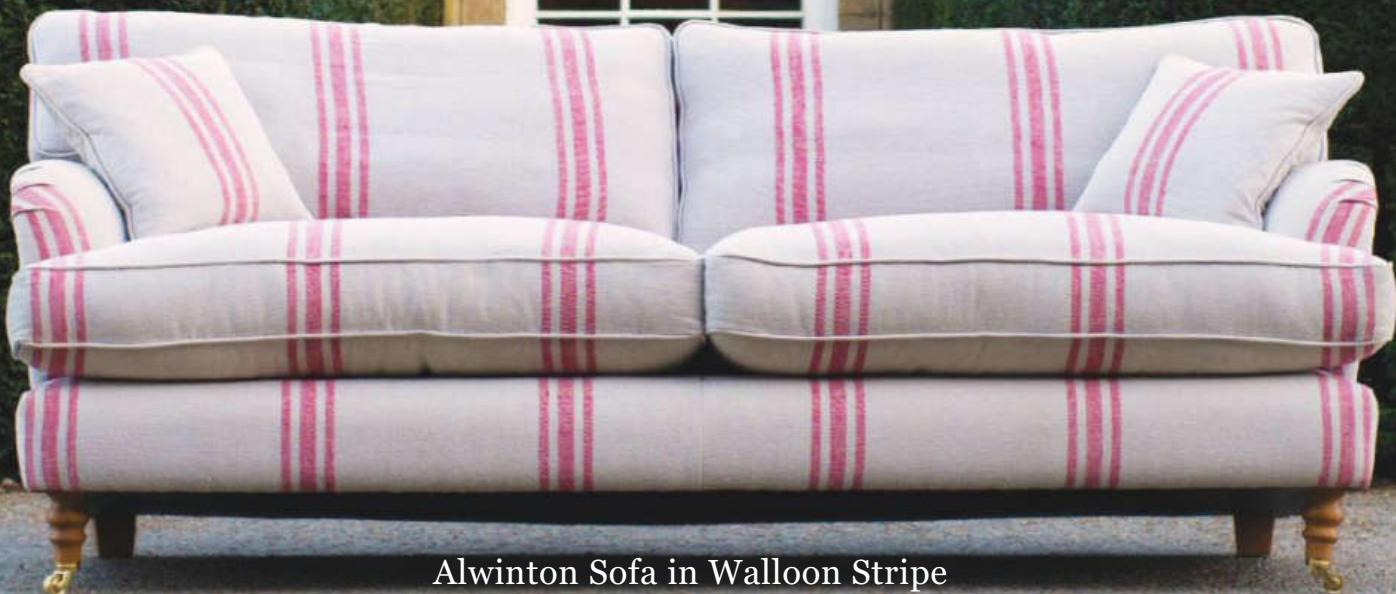
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